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ABSTRACT

This guide, which is intended for volunteer literacy programs in Alberta, Canada, details a four-step process for evaluating volunteer literacy programs and using evaluation results for program development. The guide begins with an introduction, underlying principles and assumptions, and a glossary. Sections 1-4 detail the steps of the process, which are as follows: (1) getting ready for evaluation (planning and evaluation as part of the program cycle, forming an evaluation team); (2) focusing the evaluation (determining the evaluation's purposes, selecting standards, developing a work plan); (3) collecting information (reviewing current methods and relevant documents, completing observations, preparing and distributing data collection tools); and (4) interpreting and using research findings (compiling and summarizing the information, determining whether the program is achieving its standards). Appendixes, constituting approximately two-thirds of the document, contain the following items: 10 tables for use in applying the standards and evaluating program results; sample items for surveys, interviews, and focus groups; a case study based on the combined experiences of the seven literacy programs that pilot-tested the proposed evaluation method; background information on the Alberta Literacy Project Standards; good practice statements and standards; and a bibliography listing 45 references and suggestions for further reading. (MN)

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Setting the Compass

A program development and evaluation tool for volunteer literacy programs in Alberta

Sharon Skage
Marnie Schaetti

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Acknowledgments

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During the consultations conducted with literacy coordinators, we relied on the Association's Resource People to be our link to coordinators. Our thanks go to Kathy Bulger, Elaine Cairns, Susan Devins, Pat Ewert, Marilyn Hunt, Janice Johnson, Ellen Kildaw, Meredith Ottoson, Margot Main Pollard, Carol Roberts, Janet Robertson, and Natalia Toroshenko.

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We would also like to thank the literacy programs -- and their coordinators! -- that piloted this evaluation process: Bonnyville Literacy Program, Bonnyville; Building Bridges Literacy Program, High River; County of Ponoka Literacy Project, Rimbey; The Learning Centre, Edmonton; Read/Write Project, Pincher Creek; VALID, Valleyview; and the Volunteer Tutor Bank, Red Deer.

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Introduction

Origins

This document is the final product of the Alberta Literacy Program Standards (ALPS) Project. ALPS was a project of the Association of Literacy Coordinators of Alberta, and was funded by the National Literacy Secretariat. Phase One of the project resulted in a set of good practice statements for volunteer literacy programs in Alberta, followed by a set of standards for those programs. Both the good practice statements and standards were developed in consultation with the province's literacy coordinators, who voted 98% in favor of approving them for use in the province's literacy programs. The purpose of Phase Two was to develop an evaluation process for programs to use for program development and accountability. As with previous steps, the evaluation process was developed in consultation with the province's literacy coordinators. ALPS was jointly coordinated by Sharon Skage and Marnie Schaetti.

Intended audience

This evaluation process is intended for volunteer literacy programs in Alberta. These programs, based in communities across the province, match trained volunteer tutors with adults who want to improve their reading, writing, math or spoken English skills. While specific goals and objectives are determined by each program, the following general objectives are held in common by all programs:

- to recruit and train volunteer tutors,
- to recruit and assess adult literacy students,
- to match the tutors and students in pairs,
- to support the pairs as they work one-on-one to achieve the students' literacy goals, and
- to promote the value of literacy in the broader community.

In the few years that it has taken to develop this work, the way that literacy needs are addressed in Alberta has continued to evolve. More and more programs are incorporating a variety of approaches and services into their operations: family literacy, workplace literacy, and mentoring are just some of the ways in which community literacy programs are supporting the literacy development of Albertans. While the mandate of the Alberta Literacy Program Standards (ALPS) Project was to develop good practice statements, standards, and an evaluation process for volunteer tutor adult literacy programs, it is the authors' hope that this process is designed in such a way as to be useful to plan and evaluate your entire program. In other words, it addresses the volunteer tutoring component -- the common thread among all programs -- but should allow for information about other services you might offer.

Purpose

This document is intended to be used for program development and evaluation. It is not intended to be used to compare one literacy program to another, or to be used as a job description for program coordinators. This evaluation process is intended to be used by the program staff with the support and participation of the program's board or advisory committee and other program participants. It should be incorporated into day-to-day practice, rather than being used at the end of a program cycle.

Limitations

Because of the limited time and resources available to literacy programs for program development and evaluation, it is necessary for programs to adopt this evaluation process in increments, selecting specific areas of program practice to focus on according to their priority.

Even without the need for adopting the process in increments, program staff may subconsciously or deliberately avoid evaluating some areas of their program's operations. Interpretations of evaluation findings are subject to the natural human tendency to look for evidence of what we already know or believe is true (Anderson 1987: 38). This can also be influenced by pressure to present the program in the best light in order to obtain funding and support.

While third party or external evaluation is one way to address the issue of bias, this type of evaluation is not an option for most volunteer literacy programs. The design of this evaluation process, however, duplicates some of the elements of an external evaluation: the evaluation questions and the information needed to answer them have been developed in consultation with and approved by literacy coordinators across Alberta.

This development and evaluation process is intended to be used by literacy coordinators and their programs with no previous experience in program evaluation. It should be pointed out, however, that the accuracy, validity, and reliability of the evaluation will increase with experience and with further training in qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods.

Despite these limitations, we feel that this process will be an effective tool in the maintenance and development of quality literacy programs.

Tips

- Remember this is to be phased in, so *choosing* from among the evaluation questions and standards is vital.
- Use it! Photocopy the worksheets and appendices, and write comments, highlight, illustrate, whatever it takes!
- When in doubt, use the glossary.

Principles and Assumptions

Principles

The following is a summary of what literacy coordinators in Alberta described in 1996 as the beliefs and values that they bring to their work. These beliefs and values are essential to understanding and interpreting the good practice statements, standards, and evaluation process.

- Literacy programs should reflect and meet the needs of the individual in his/her context (home, work, community).
- Accessible literacy education is a basic right.
- Literacy skills are empowering, and enhance a person's quality of life.
- Every individual has worth and ability, and deserves to be respected.
- Learning happens when a person feels safe, is willing to take risks, and can feel personal success.
- Learning is lifelong. We are all both teachers and learners.
- Literacy is a community responsibility.
- Literacy coordinators are facilitators, helping others so they can help themselves.
- Honesty, sincerity, and fairness are essential values for a literacy program.

Assumptions

The good practice statements, standards, and evaluation process are based on the understanding that:

- Students are the first priority in all aspects of literacy programming and operation.
- Volunteer literacy programs respect the diversity of experiences, backgrounds, and goals of participants.
- Evaluation should be a participatory process; that is, participants should have the opportunity to take part in program evaluation.
- Programs must receive stable and adequate funding in order to accomplish and/or maintain good practice.

Glossary

For the purpose of this document, the following definitions are used:

Benchmark: a point of reference in measuring or judging quality.

Community: the geographic area in which a program is located, whether it is as small as a neighborhood or as large as a municipal district, including the general population of that area; or more specific groups of individuals and agencies within the larger population whose interests and activities are related to that of the literacy program.

Evaluation: the process of collecting and analyzing information about a program or any of its components. Program participants use this information to make plans for the program, and to judge the effectiveness of the program relative to its stated goals.

Exit assessment: the means of determining the extent to which a student has achieved his or her goals. (Also called final assessment.)

Good practice statement: a description of an activity or condition that contributes to an effective, high quality literacy program.

Indicators: key pieces of information used to indicate whether a program is meeting the standards of performance.

Initial assessment: the means of determining an individual student's strengths and levels of competency in reading, writing and/or math, and his or her preferred learning style. Initial assessment information is used to develop an instructional program which meets a student's needs, interests, and goals. (Also called placement assessment.)

Mission statement: a brief statement which describes the purpose of the literacy program.

On-going assessment: the means of determining a student's progress toward his or her goals. (Also called progress assessment.)

Philosophy: guidelines and beliefs about how a literacy program should operate. A mission statement and a statement of values could be components of a program's philosophy.

Program: an individual volunteer literacy organization. When a standard says that "the program" is responsible for an activity or condition, the focus is on ensuring that the activity or condition takes place. Who actually carries out the task depends on the individual program; it may be the literacy coordinator, another paid staff, the board or advisory council, or a volunteer. The assumption is that this decision will be made at the program level. In this way, responsibility is not automatically placed on the coordinator if there are other program participants who take part in the program's operation.

Program participants: those individuals directly involved in the program, including students, tutors, paid and volunteer staff, and advisory council or board members.

Qualitative data: facts, claims, and assertions in narrative form, and not in numbers.

Quantitative data: facts, claims and assertions presented in numerical forms.

Reliability: the extent to which repeated measurements, using the same tool under the same conditions, produce the same results.

Sources of information: the people, records, reports, or other materials that provide indicator information.

Staff: both paid personnel and the volunteers who support the program in ways other than tutoring.

Standard: a benchmark against which programs can be evaluated.

Validity: the extent to which a tool measures correctly what it is designed to measure.

Values statement: a summary of the ethical principles which underlie program practice.

Vision statement: the picture that program participants develop of their organization in the future, describing the ideal to which their program aspires.

Volunteer literacy programs: the provision of student-centered literacy education services to communities through the use of volunteer tutors. Although services may frequently include broader social and communication skills, the focus is on improving reading, writing and math skills.

Volunteers: those who donate time and energy to help achieve the objectives of the literacy program, including tutors, volunteer staff, and advisory council or board members.

Step 1 Getting Ready for Evaluation

Purpose of Step 1

In Step 1, you will become familiar with this document and the concepts of planning and evaluation; recruit people from your program and community as members of an evaluation team; think about and describe the characteristics of your program; and look at how ready your program's participants are for an evaluation.

Why it's useful

When this document was piloted in seven literacy programs around the province, coordinators reported that they found Step 1 useful because:

- putting an evaluation team together was a pivotal part of using the evaluation process, and it also made the coordinator take the time to plan and organize the process;
- the list of responsibilities helped in putting the evaluation team together;
- having to explain the process to other potential evaluation team members made the coordinator become very aware of the process right from the start;
- it made the coordinator collect important information and get it to the evaluation team; and
- describing the program's context helped the coordinator to think about what the program is doing, what it is not doing, and where they might focus the evaluation.

For an example of a program's experience in using Step 1, please see the case study on page 144.

How much time does it take?

On average, it took the pilot site programs five hours to work through Step 1. This included reading the document, calling potential evaluation team members, meeting with the team, and locating and recording information about the program.

Becoming familiar with this document

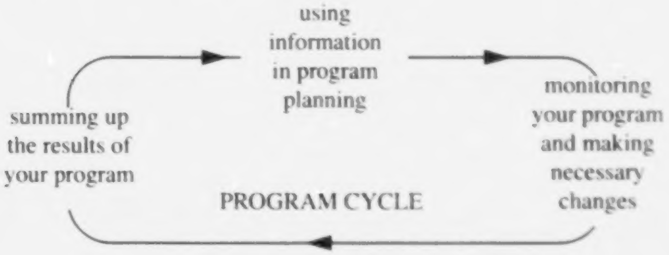
We encourage you to spend some time becoming familiar with this document before working through Step 1. Taking a few moments to read the Introduction, Principles and Assumptions, and the Glossary in the opening pages will provide a context for using the tool. Reviewing the first page of each of the four steps will help you to understand what the purpose of each step is, how others have found it useful, and how the process moves from one step to another.

The rest of the document contains appendices, and again there is an introduction for the first two explaining their purpose and how others have found them useful. The third appendix is a case study that describes a literacy program's experiences in using this tool. The last three appendices are self-explanatory, containing background on the project that produced this document, the previously-published good practice statement and standards document, and a bibliography.

The bulk of this document may be intimidating at first, but you'll quickly find that the program development and evaluation tool itself is quite simple and straightforward. Much of the document is made up of appendices, which contain very detailed information provided to make this task as easy as possible for coordinators and their programs, while still allowing for the flexibility and diversity so important to literacy work in our communities.

Planning and evaluation as part of your program cycle

Planning and evaluation are part of a continuous cycle that is an integral part of what happens in literacy programs. At its most informal, it may be a matter of the coordinator thinking, "What are we going to do this year?" and asking tutors, "How is it going?" This document is designed to address the need expressed by literacy coordinators for a tool that will support planning and evaluation, both for program development purposes and for accountability.


using information in program planning
monitoring your program and making necessary changes
summing up the results of your program
PROGRAM CYCLE

Looking at this cycle, we see that evaluation is done for two general reasons. The first is to monitor, on an on-going basis, how well your program is operating. The second general reason evaluation is done is to sum up the results of your program's activities and use the information to report on program results and accomplishments.

Information from both of these types of evaluation -- day-to-day monitoring and summing up -- is used in planning for future programming. Monitoring your program will give you information that you can use to identify and address any problems that may come up, to know what is working well, and to improve services to students. Looking at the results of your program at the end of a cycle will give you information that you can use as you and your council or board make plans for the upcoming year.

Forming an evaluation team

One of the first things you should do to get ready for evaluation is to form an evaluation team. In some instances, the program coordinator may need to take sole responsibility for evaluation, but usually there are other people who can share the responsibility.

The evaluation team should be quite small, perhaps four or five people, and include representatives from the program's major stakeholders: students, tutors, paid and volunteer staff, advisory council or board members, and community partners. When thinking about whom to approach, consider what knowledge and/or skills the team should possess. For example, you might be looking for people who are familiar with the program, who have good interpersonal skills, or who have some experience with basic research, such as doing focus groups or interviews.

Inviting participation

We suggest that you send a letter out to prospective evaluation team members. (You may wish to have a tutor go over the letter with a student.) In the letter, give a brief description of the literacy program, the need for evaluation, and a summary statement of the role of the evaluation team. Emphasize the importance of involving members of the program and the community in planning and evaluating the program, and ask them to consider participating. If possible, give a start date and an end date for their involvement. End the letter by letting them know when you will be contacting them. (There is a sample letter to potential evaluation team members on the following page.)

Follow up on the letter with a telephone call or conversation with potential team members. Ask them if they are interested in being part of the evaluation team, and if they are, invite them to a meeting to learn more about the evaluation process and about the role of the evaluation team.

Sample letter to potential evaluation team members

(Date)

Dear ______________,

The ABC Literacy Program is committed to serving literacy students in Anywhere and surrounding areas. As a (tutor/volunteer/student/advisory council or board member/supportive business person), I know that you share that commitment.

Since the program began nine years ago, our purpose has been to help community members improve their literacy and English as a Second Language (ESL) skills. Students come from Anywhere and the surrounding area to work one-on-one with our trained volunteer tutors and we do our best to help them meet their literacy or ESL goals.

One way we can make sure that we are doing our best for students is by evaluating our program. We already do this all the time in an informal way. For example, tutors ask students how the lesson went, or I ask tutors what kind of in-service workshop they might want. We can also ask this kind of question more systematically and that's what we plan to do this year. We will decide what questions we want to have answered about the program and how it works. Then we will ask many different participants in the program for their views. We will make decisions about the program and base future planning on what we have found out.

An evaluation team will lead this work. I am writing you to ask you to be part of that team. The evaluation team will meet five or six times over the course of the year. The exact number of meetings will be decided by the team at the first meeting on _____________. We'll also discuss at that meeting what the specific role of the committee and its members will be. We intend to finish the evaluation by __________.

I realize that you already give a lot to the program and that you are a busy person. I am writing you because your knowledge of the program and your perspective on it are just what we need. We will be asking others to participate who see the program from different points of view. The team will have total of four or five people on it. I will be a member and I hope to have you and (a student/a tutor/an advisory council or board member/someone from the community at large) join me. Together, we can take a good look at the program, see where our successes lie and where we might do better.

Please, do consider joining the team. I hope the experience will be rewarding and I'm sure that we will all learn a lot.

If you have any questions, please call me at the office. I'd be happy to provide more information.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe, Coordinator

Orienting the evaluation team

When you first meet with members of your evaluation team, you will need to introduce and discuss the concept of evaluation, as well as the process that will be used.

Evaluation of a literacy program serves two main purposes: to gather together information that can be used for program development ("to see what works and what we could do better"), and to collect information that can be used for accountability and demonstrating the value of the program. You will find more information that will be helpful in introducing the concept of evaluation in the "Introduction" section earlier in this document.

To give the evaluation team a brief overview of the program development and evaluation process, make copies of the Table of Contents from this document and use that during your meeting. You can also use the information in Appendix D to give the team a sense of how this process was developed and how literacy coordinators were involved.

What the evaluation team as a whole and what individual team members will do during the evaluation will depend on your specific situation. In your first meeting, however, you may want to consider the following as possible general responsibilities for the evaluation team:

- ensuring a common understanding of the purpose of evaluation, such as what can and cannot be expected from evaluation;
- ensuring common frames of reference, such as common definitions of terms, agreement on timelines and resource expenditures, etc.;
- step-by-step planning of the evaluation (see the workplan in Step 2);
- deciding who will lead or coordinate the evaluation;
- securing the required resources;
- monitoring the progress of the evaluation; and
- suggesting changes to the evaluation process if necessary.

When discussing the evaluation team's responsibilities, be very clear about expectations for their involvement. For example, the evaluation team will likely meet up to six times in the first year/cycle that the evaluation process is used. Similarly, people may have certain expectations about their involvement, and it is important for those to be part of the discussions as well.

Once your and your evaluation team begin working with the program development and evaluation process, you will be able to make decisions as to what specific role the team and its individual members will play in carrying out the four steps of the evaluation.

Describing your program and its context

Before you can effectively evaluate your program, you need to record information about your program and its context. This information will be used later when you are interpreting the information collected in the evaluation. For example, your evaluation results may show that the coordinator is not contacting students and tutors as often as the standards suggest. Looking at the human resources available (question #3 below), however, it may be clear that the hours of paid staff time per week would need to increase before that contact could happen. In other words, looking at the program and its context can help to explain your evaluation findings.

This information may already exist in the form of planning records, annual reports, funding proposals, etc. If not, you may find the following worksheets helpful in collecting the information.

Some of the information requested may not change from year to year, as in "size of area," and "number of months per year the program operates." Where information is time sensitive, use information from the program cycle being evaluated unless otherwise noted. For example, use your funding figures for 1999 - 2000 if that is the program cycle you are evaluating.

Instructions: Photocopy and complete the questions on the following six pages. The first two pages are both a "pull-out" to send to Community Programs as well as part of this process of reflecting on your program and its context. (Be sure to save a copy of the completed "pull-out" sheets for your records.)

If applicable, the questions can be divided among members of the evaluation team to complete.

During our meetings with literacy coordinators, we were told frequently that they would prefer not to have to use this document and complete a separate report for Community Programs of Advanced Education and Career Development. We have, with the government's cooperation, incorporated the "Participation Summary" form into this document. Use pp. 14 - 15 and pp. 92 - 96 (in the Program Results section) to replace the Participation Summary from Community Programs. (You will receive a letter from Community Programs advising you when to fill in and submit the forms.)

Volunteer Tutor Literacy Programs
Participation Summary

Program cycle being evaluated: ______________________________

(e.g. Sept. 1/99 - June 15/00 or Apr. 1/99 - Mar. 30/00)

Prepared by: ______________________________ Telephone number: ______________

Program name: ____

Community Adult Learning Council: ____

Name specific communities/areas where students were tutored during this program cycle (e.g. Sandy Creek and rural areas of Wild Rose, Briarlea, and Round Lake): ____________________

____

____

Population of area: ____

Size of area (estimate square kilometres of total area, or use average radius from program office): ____

Total Community Programs grant allocation for volunteer tutor program: $__________________

Total additional revenue for volunteer tutor program (see page 98 when completing #8 in Program Results): $________________

Sources of above additional revenue: ____

____

____

(Submit pp. 14 - 15 and pp. 92 - 96 to Community Programs.)

Relationship to other organizations, if applicable (e.g. "XYZ College hires staff, administers funding, and provides a board that directs the program," "ABC Learning Council hosts the program and has a representative on the advisory committee"): ____________________

Legal or non-legal status of literacy program (e.g. "literacy program is an incorporated society," "literacy program operates under the local school division"): ____________________

What are the literacy program's goals for this program cycle? (e.g. "At the recent planning day, goals for this program year included increasing the number of student/tutor pairs by 5, improving access to the program, and raising our community profile.") ____________________

(Submit pp. 14 - 15 and pp.92 - 96 to Community Programs.)

1 What are the program's features?

Information needed	**Description**
geographic location (e.g. County of Lethbridge, north-east Edmonton)	
size of program (list separately the number of students, tutors, and other volunteers at the end of the last program cycle)	
number of months per year the program operates (do not include months the program is closed but pairs continue to meet)	
length of time the program has been in operation	
other (e.g. program philosophy, description of facility) *Note: before adding other information here, check the remaining questions in this section and the "Program Results" questions on pp. 91-99 to avoid duplication.*	

2 What are the human resources available in this program cycle? (Information about volunteers is included in the "Program Results" questions on pp. 91 - 99.)

Information needed	Description
number of paid staff (identify full-time and part-time)	
hours of paid staff time per week	
number and type of external resource people available to the program (e.g. program development support, counselors, trainers)	
total hours of training and professional development for paid staff (include program-specific, regional, provincial)	
other (e.g. part-time or full-time contract staff, estimated unpaid overtime)	

3 What are the other resources available in this program cycle?

Information needed	Description
grants or project funding for services, projects, etc. other than the volunteer tutor program	
contributions in kind (e.g. office space, telephone, use of photocopier)	
resource library (list general contents, e.g. videos, books, games, etc.)	
professional associations (e.g. Literacy Coordinators of Alberta, Alberta Association for Adult Literacy)	
other	

(Photocopy and save original)

Gauging readiness

A program's readiness to conduct an evaluation depends on many factors, including time, money, attitudes, and leadership. Before proceeding with an evaluation, it would be useful to determine just how ready your program is. Ideally, you should have board/council/committee members and staff answer the following questions independently so you can see areas of agreement and disagreement as well as issues that will act as barriers to evaluation. If there are significant disagreement or barriers, steps will need to be taken to address these before a successful evaluation can be implemented.

Instructions: Photocopy the checklist on the following page and use it to collect information on how ready your program is for evaluation. The pages following the checklist will give you ideas on how to address disagreement or barriers.

Checklist to see how ready our program is for evaluation

Part of preparing to do program evaluation is finding out how ready our program is for evaluation. To help us to find out if there is anything that needs to be addressed first, please complete the following checklist by answering "yes" or "no" for each question. You do not need to include your name, but please tell us whether you are a staff person, board/council/committee member, volunteer, or student. Thanks!

	Yes	**No**	**Don't know**
1. Do people involved with the program agree on the mission, goals, and major activities of our program?			
2. Is conducting program evaluation seen as consistent with the program's philosophy, or the approach we take to literacy work?			
3. Are people connected with our program interested in evaluation?			
4. Is evaluation seen as providing useful information to our program?			
5. Do people see the benefits of evaluation as being greater than the costs of time and money?			
6. Is program evaluation seen as a threat and a sign of distrust?			
7. Does our program have a planning structure that will use the evaluation findings?			
8. Do staff, students, and volunteers believe that their ideas and feelings are valued and respected by program decision makers?			
9. Is there money available to support an evaluation of this program?			
10. Is there staff time available for the evaluation?			
11. Are staff willing to take risks in trying new ways of doing things?			
12. Do leaders in our program demonstrate excitement and energy about change and innovation?			

I am a... _____ staff person _____ tutor or other volunteer

_____ board/council/committee member _____ student

Addressing barriers to evaluation

If the results of the checklist on the previous page tell you that there are some significant barriers or challenges to doing program evaluation, the following ideas should help you to address them. They are organized according to the items on the checklist.

Barrier	**Suggestions for addressing the barrier**
1. There is a belief that people do not agree on the mission, goals, and major activities of the program.	People need to agree on what to evaluate before evaluation can be done, or the findings will be meaningless. If using this checklist shows that people don't agree on what the mission, goals, and major activities of the program are, these need to be reviewed and communicated to participants. If there isn't a mission, developing one should be a priority.
2. Conducting program evaluation is not seen as consistent with the program's philosophy or approach.	Program evaluation is about maintaining and improving quality services to students. You may hear statements like "Volunteers shouldn't be asked to complete surveys; it's enough that they give their time tutoring," or "We'll scare students away by asking too many questions." If evaluation is presented as a means of improving services to students, it may be recognized as being more consistent with the program's approach. An open discussion of how evaluation is seen as consistent or inconsistent may provide valuable suggestions for the best way to conduct the evaluation.
3. People connected with the program are not interested in evaluation.	If people are not interested in evaluation, perhaps they don't understand the relationships between evaluation, planning, and delivering quality programs. The benefits of program evaluation (to recruit and retain staff, enlist and motivate volunteers, attract new students, engage partners, retain or increase funding, raise public awareness, etc.) should be discussed with program participants.
4. Evaluation is not seen as providing useful information to the program.	Discussing the information that evaluation will yield, using the standards for volunteer literacy programs developed by the L.C.A. as a reference, might be helpful in demonstrating that evaluation is not just required for accountability but useful for program development.
5. People do not see the benefits of evaluation as being greater than the costs of time and money.	Evaluation does take time and money to accomplish. Having people identify what benefits would be worthwhile might encourage them to see the program invest its resources in evaluation.

Barrier	Suggestions for addressing the barrier
6. Program evaluation is seen as a threat and a sign of distrust.	Discussing what program evaluation is *not* for might be helpful in alleviating concerns. It is not an evaluation of the program coordinator, and it is not for the purpose of comparing one program to another. Evaluation is part of program operations in most fields, and is now expected of literacy programs. Emphasis on the use of evaluation findings in program planning and development will be useful.
7. The program doesn't have a planning structure that will use the evaluation findings.	If evaluation findings are not used, concerns about wasting time and resources will be confirmed. If the program doesn't currently have a planning structure in place, now is the time to develop one. It may be as simple as an annual planning day involving staff, board/council/committee members, tutors, and student.
8. People do not feel their ideas and feelings are valued and respected.	Evaluation involves hearing from people about what effect the program is having. People will be encouraged to give their views on the program if they feel the interest is genuine and their comments will be used.
9. There isn't money available to support an evaluation of this program.	This is not an easy one to address. The amount of money necessary for evaluation will depend on how extensive an evaluation your program wants to do. It will include money for postage if you are mailing surveys, some amount of photocopying, and money for refreshments if you are bringing people together for focus groups and evaluation-related meetings. It may include long distance charges depending on your methods of collecting information and where your program participants live. Money for evaluation should be included in the program's grant application, and should be an ongoing line item in the program budget.
10. There isn't staff time available for the evaluation.	As with #9, the amount of staff time depends on the amount of evaluation. Again, time for evaluation should be included in the budget calculations for staff wages. In addition, are there creative ways to reallocate some staff responsibilities to other program participants so as to make time available for evaluation, e.g. producing the program's newsletter? (When this tool was piloted, the average amount of time needed to conduct the entire evaluation process, looking at a minimum of 10 standards, was 40 hours.)

Barrier	Suggestions for addressing the barrier
11. The staff are reluctant to take risks in trying new ways of doing things.	Introducing this evaluation process may mean a change in how things are done in the program. How have staff reacted to change in the past? Do they feel confident in taking risks, or have they been discouraged in the past from trying new things? Staff need to feel supported in order to feel comfortable with taking risks.
12. Leaders in the program do not demonstrate excitement and energy about change and innovation.	This again relates to how people in the program react to change. Leaders -- whether board members or the program coordinator -- should be positive role models, taking a positive attitude towards the changes that this evaluation process will bring.

Step 2 Focusing the Evaluation

Purpose of Step 2

In Step 1, you prepared some background information on your program that will help you to interpret your evaluation findings. You also looked at some suggestions for finding out how ready your program is to be evaluated. In Step 2, you will identify the reasons why you are doing an evaluation, and who you are doing it for. You'll use that information as you choose questions that you need to answer about your program, and from there you will select standards that relate to those questions.

Once you have decided upon the standards for this evaluation cycle, you will look at what resources you'll need to carry out this evaluation. You'll develop a workplan for the evaluation, and look at how you can best approach people to let them know that these activities will be taking place.

Why it's useful

When this document was being piloted, coordinators reported that they found Step 2 useful in the following ways:

- without a real focus of why we're doing evaluation and what we really want to know, it is wasted time and energy (something literacy projects stretch to the limit already);
- the process of thinking through who, what, when, and how was very helpful in starting to plan the evaluation;
- it allowed them to select standards that will benefit and improve program operation;
- having the lists of indicators, possible sources of information, and suggested methods of collecting information already prepared was very helpful;
- the "Resources and Priorities" section really helped to get a clear and realistic picture of what they needed to do and how they could go about their work; and
- working through this step really helped to understand the evaluation process.

For an example of a program's experience in using Step 2, please see the case study on page 144.

How much time does it take?

On average, it took the pilot site programs a total of six hours to complete Step 2.

Clarifying why you're doing evaluation, and for whom

In Step 1, we looked at how evaluation happens in an on-going way when you monitor your program's operations, and as a way of summing up the results of your program's activities. It is unlikely that you will want to systematically evaluate every aspect of your program at once, so this section will help you to focus the evaluation by thinking about what information will be needed and by whom in this program cycle.

Whether you're doing evaluation for the purpose of monitoring your program operations or looking at what the program results are, you will likely have different audiences for different parts of your evaluation findings. For example, looking at how well initial tutor training went would be useful to staff before they plan a follow-up workshop. Information on how many students were served by the end of the program cycle would be useful to a number of different audiences, such as partner agencies and funders. An important part of focusing your evaluation is to think about the different audiences that you need to provide with information.

In looking at the following suggestions for audiences, you may think that all of them are important and necessary. It may not be feasible, however, to try to provide every stakeholder with information in one program evaluation. You may need to set priorities for this evaluation, and incorporate the rest into program planning for following years.

Instructions: The checklist below is provided to help you focus on why you are doing evaluation, and who you need to provide evaluation information to. There are a few examples given to suggest why these groups might be important audiences. Photocopy the checklist and rank your choices in terms of priority if you need to. After doing this step you will move on to looking at what kinds of questions these audiences might have about the program, and how those questions could be answered.

Monitoring program operations

- paid staff (e.g.for short-term program planning) ☐
- students (e.g. to provide encouragement) ☐
- tutors (e.g. to show that the program is a worthwhile place to volunteer) ☐
- board/council/committee members (e.g. to provide direction to staff and other program participants) ☐

- funders (e.g. for interim reports) ☐
- other ______________________________ ☐
- ______________________________ ☐

Determining program results

- paid staff (e.g. for long-term program planning, recruitment) ☐
- students (e.g. to show that the program helps students achieve their goals) ☐
- volunteers (e.g. to confirm the value of their contributions) ☐
- board/council/committee members (e.g. to make decisions regarding allocation of program resources) ☐
- funders (e.g. to demonstrate accountability and value of service) ☐
- partner agencies (e.g. to help make decisions about their relationship to the program) ☐
- community (e.g.to garner community support for the program) ☐
- other ______________________________ ☐
- ______________________________ ☐

(Photocopy and save original)

Identifying questions you need to answer about your program

In the previous section, you identified program participants and other stakeholders who will need information from this program evaluation. In this section, you will think about the kinds of questions that these people have about the program. These questions have been divided into two types: those that deal with program operations and those that deal with program results.

"Program operations" questions deal with how well the program is being implemented. This section contains the standards for volunteer literacy programs developed and approved by Alberta's literacy coordinators. (For information on the LCA's Good Practice Statements and Standards, see Appendix E.)

"Program results" questions relate to the results of the program and its impact on participants. For example, program results include the number of hours of tutoring provided and the number of people served by the program.

As mentioned earlier, the amount of time and resources available for evaluation differ from one program to the next. Depending on your program's situation, and your current evaluation practices, you may choose to answer all of the program operations and program results questions, or you may select those that are a priority for this program cycle.

Instructions: Photocopy and review the following list of questions for program operations and program results. Check off those questions that are the highest priority for this program cycle. In the next section you will select from related standards.

Program Operations

1. In what ways is our program community based? ☐
   This question relates to standards on assessing and responding to community needs; relationship with board/council/committee; community partnerships and support; and promotional activities.
2. In what ways does our program have a relevant and applied philosophy? ☐
   This question relates to standards on the development, review, application, and communication of philosophy-related statements.
3. In what ways do we deliver programming that addresses the needs of the individual? ☐
   This question relates to standards on intake procedures, including interview, initial assessment and orientation; student goal setting and assessment; instruction, including matching and working with a tutor; student support; and student recognition.
4. In what ways are we providing quality tutoring? ☐
   This question relates to standards on recruitment and interview; initial and on-going training; tutor support; and tutor recognition.
5. In what ways do we have sound program administration? ☐
   This question relates to standards on accountability and responsibility (e.g. decision making, operational responsibility, fiscal management); recruiting and hiring staff; staff training and support; confidentiality and record keeping; effective use of time

and resources; volunteer recognition; and resource materials, facilities and equipment.

6. In what ways is our program effectively planned and evaluated? ☐
This question relates to standards on program planning and program evaluation.

Program Results

7. What services were delivered during this program cycle? ☐
This question has to do with the number of people involved in the program; hours of participation; and other services provided.

*Note: #7 is required for all programs as part of the Participation Summary-related information for Community Programs. For that reason, it also includes student satisfaction items.

8. What were the costs of delivering the program? ☐
This questions relates to actual costs of running the program as well as other contributions.

9. What is the impact of the program on its participants? ☐
This question has to do with benefits to or changes in participants as well as tutor satisfaction with the program.

(Photocopy and save original)

> "After reading through the questions, I chose the ones that I felt would be most beneficial for our program. Certain aspects of our program had concerned me, and there were questions that addressed these concerns."
>
> -- pilot site coordinator

Selecting standards and related items

In the previous section you reviewed a list of questions, and selected those that are the most relevant for this evaluation. In this section you will review the standards related to the Program Operations questions, and select those that you feel would be the most relevant and feasible for this evaluation.

The introduction of standards should be a developmental process. The achievement of standards, as well as being able to demonstrate the achievement of standards, will take time for some programs. The important thing is to be working toward achieving standards in a manageable way and as time and resources permit. Also, remember that the purpose of evaluation should be to demonstrate the program's successes as well as to identify areas that need development.

Instructions: Using your list of selected questions as a guide, turn to Appendix A on page 62. Photocopy the relevant pages and save the originals for future use. For each evaluation question that you have selected, review all the related standards. Select the standards that you think would be the most useful and feasible to answer the evaluation questions that you have selected, considering your goals for this year and the audiences for your evaluation findings.

For each evaluation question, there is a blank row at the end of the table called "other." This is for adding your own items that you feel would help to answer the evaluation question. (See pp. 100 for an example of how this is used.)

Once you have selected the standards, you will need to decide how you'll show where your program is at in relation to the selected standards. Use the tables to select indicators, sources of information, and methods of collecting information. Remember that there is often a range of indicators suggested, and your program is to choose from among them unless otherwise noted.

Remember that using 2 – 3 sources of information and collection methods will provide a more valid and comprehensive picture of the literacy program than relying on a single source and/or method. For example, you will get a better sense of things if you don't limit your evaluation to reviewing documents, but ask students and tutors for feedback through surveys, interviews, or focus groups. Before selecting the methods of collecting information, see page 38 in Step 3 for tips on how surveys, interviews, etc. can be used.

When using a particular method of collecting information, make it worthwhile in terms of the number of standards it can address. For example, if you want to survey tutors to find out how satisfied they are with their tutor job description, you should select other standards where you can collect information by surveying tutors.

> "I didn't find the standards overwhelming or unattainable even though we are a small project.... I have discussed this with several people and often I hear comments such as, 'That's fine for the city but what about our little country program?' Well, I really feel that whether you have 10 or 200 students or 1 or 20 staff, the standards can be met...."
>
> -- pilot site coordinator

Selecting Program Results items

When you selected evaluation questions earlier in this step, you will have noticed that there are three questions that address Program Results, rather than Program Operations (standards). Of these three questions, question #7 is to be used by all programs to replace the Participation Summary formerly sent out by Community Programs at Advanced Education and Career Development. (Community Programs will send a letter letting you know when to fill out and submit those pages.) You'll find pull-out sheets for question #7 at the back of Appendix A (pp. 92 -96) and instructions on filling out Participation Summary-related information on pp. 13 and 91.

There are also worksheets at the back of Appendix A to use as you select items related to questions #8 and 9, if those were among your choices for evaluation questions earlier in this section.

Instructions: Considering your choices for Program Results evaluation questions on page 27, review the worksheets at the back of Appendix A (pp. 92 - 99. If you chose evaluation question #8 or 9, select the table items that would be useful for this planning and evaluation cycle. Where necessary, select from the sources of information and methods of collecting information as you did earlier in Appendix A.

Identifying resources and setting priorities

Now that you've decided how you want to focus your evaluation for this year, you need to look at what resources would be needed to carry it out, and at what resources you actually have available. (There is a worksheet on the following page to help you do this.) If there is a significant difference between the two, you may need to revise your evaluation plans and establish further priorities.

In determining the resources you'll need for your evaluation, you'll need to look at some basic resource needs as well as resource needs related to your selected evaluation questions and standards. Basic resource needs might include staff time to organize an evaluation team; costs for your evaluation team to meet; staff time to compile information collected; and staff time to interpret the information, draw conclusions, and recommend follow-up actions. There may also be some time and copying costs involved in getting the findings out to program stakeholders. (The amount of paid staff time for these tasks depends on how involved volunteer evaluation team members are in the evaluation.)

Resources needed for addressing selected evaluation questions and the standards related to them depend on your choices. You may have costs associated with bringing participants together for focus groups, including refreshments, renting a meeting place, etc. You may need a resource person (board member, agency representative, etc.) not known to students and tutors for conducting interviews or holding focus groups. Staff or an evaluation team member will need time to review documents. Photocopying may be necessary for making copies of questionnaires and survey forms.

Once you have calculated the cost of evaluation in financial terms, be sure to include evaluation as a line item in your program's budget and funding applications.

If the chart on the following pages shows you that you do not have the resources required for all of the evaluation questions and standards that you've selected, you will either need to find the resources or assign priorities to your selections, and leave the rest until another evaluation cycle.

Resources and Priorities

Instructions: Photocopy these pages and, according to your selections earlier in this section, list the standards and evaluation questions by number in the following chart. (List them by number, write them out, or cut and paste from Appendix A.)Write down the resources you'll need for each one, according to your plans for sources of information and methods of collecting information in Appendix A. In the third column, check whether these resources are available or not. After you've finished, assign priority if necessary.

List evaluation questions and standards	**List resources needed**	**Are resources available? (Yes/No)**	**Priority for this year?**
example: 4.2: The program has clearly written and realistic job descriptions for its tutors.	• *time to review job descriptions (10 minutes)* • *time to prepare a tutor survey and include it in the January newsletter, using questions in Appendix B (1.5 hours) (Note: this time would allow for any other standards requiring an item in the tutor survey, so you would repeat this for resources needed, but put "0" for the time required.)*	*Yes* *Yes*	
example: #7: student satisfaction questions	• *time to prepare a set of questions for a focus group with students, using questions in Appendix B (.5 hour)* • *time to invite students to meeting (1 hour)* • *time for meeting (2 hours)* • *money for refreshments*	*Yes*	

(Photocopy and save original.)

List evaluation question by number or standard by number and letter	List resources needed	Are resources available? (Yes/No)	Priority for this year?

(Photocopy and save original.)

Developing a workplan for the evaluation

The next step in the evaluation process is to develop a workplan: what needs to be done, by whom, and when. Such a workplan will help you to plan ahead and to incorporate evaluation into your everyday practice. We have included a sample workplan on the following pages for you to use and adapt as necessary. It uses an example of a September 1 to June 30 program cycle.

In setting the timelines for the evaluation, the evaluation team should keep several considerations in mind.

- First, evaluation of the literacy program must serve both the program's on-going internal need for information and its cyclical need to report to funders.
- Second, the literacy program's own cycle, deadlines, and planned events will affect the evaluation timelines. For example, it might be wise not to plan a labour-intensive portion of the evaluation process to coincide with tutor training.
- Third, the availability of resources, especially from outside the program, may be limited at certain times. For example, if a program were to ask an Adult Basic Education instructor to lead a focus group with students, consideration would have to be given to that program's schedule.
- Finally, agencies and organizations which support the program will require reports to be submitted according to the deadlines established by those organizations.

The evaluation team should realize that any timelines established at this stage may shift as the evaluation is carried out, and that dealing effectively with emerging issues is more important to the success of the evaluation than meeting deadlines which were established before the issues were known.

Sample Workplan

Instructions: Complete the dates for each activity and the person(s) responsible. Shift activities to other months and add your own activities as necessary.

Timeline	Activity	Person(s) responsible
September		
	form an evaluation team (Step 1)	
	collect information on students entering the program (ongoing)	
October		
	complete this workplan	
	complete worksheets on program context (Step 1)	
	complete exercise on program readiness (Step 1)	
	clarify why you're doing evaluation (Step 2)	
November		
	choose evaluation questions; select standards and related items; identify resources needed and available; and set priorities if necessary (Step 2)	
	let program participants know what their roles will be in the evaluation (Step 2)	
	prepare surveys, questionnaires, etc. to use in collecting information (Step 3)	
December		
	test surveys, questionnaires, etc. (Step 3)	
January		
	begin to review documents (Step 3)	

(Photocopy and save original.)

Timeline	Activity	Person(s) responsible
February		
	finish reviewing documents (Step 3)	
March		
	conduct observations (Step 3)	
	distribute surveys (Step 3)	
April		
	report relevant results to Community Programs	
	compile results of surveys, observations (Step 4)	
	hold interviews (Step 3)	
	hold focus groups (Step 3)	
May		
	summarize information collected (Step 4)	
	interpret information and relate it to standards and evaluation questions (Step 4)	
	develop conclusions and recommended actions (Step 4)	
	inform students, tutors, etc. of evaluation findings and any follow-up actions (Step 4)	
June		

(Photocopy and save original.)

Informing people about the evaluation

Once you have your workplan completed, you will need to inform program participants about what their role will be in the evaluation. Those who will be contacted to give feedback on the program should be aware of this as early in the program cycle as possible. The idea of participating in the program evaluation should be presented as a routine aspect of program practice, not something separate from it.

For example, you might want to put a note in the tutor newsletter advising them that they will be receiving a survey in March to gather their ideas on the program.

Step 3 Collecting information

Purpose of Step 3

In Step 2, you focused your evaluation by selecting evaluation questions, choosing standards, looking at the resources you'll need for evaluation, and developing a workplan. In Step 3, you will prepare your tools for collecting information, test them, and then collect the information you need to answer your evaluation questions.

Why it's useful

Coordinators of the literacy programs where this tool was piloted reported that Step 3 was useful in the following ways:

- it provided the program with a way to focus its evaluation as well as with tools for each group of stakeholders;
- it helped to determine the best methods of collecting information for their program; and
- a great deal of time is saved by having questions for surveys, interviews, etc. already prepared.

For an example of a program's experience in using Step 3, please see the case study on page 144.

How much time does it take?

The average time it took the pilot sites to work through Step 3 was twenty-two hours. It's important to note that collecting information for an evaluation can be spread out over many months, as shown in the sample workplan on pp. 33 - 34.

> "We submit an annual survey anyway but this one was much more focused and structured. I really felt that by doing this process (interviews, focus groups, etc.) we really had direction for change and improvement. I can't stress enough how much I needed to know what I should be doing, how I should be doing it, and what steps I need to take to get there or start there."
>
> -- pilot site coordinator

Tips on using different methods

Before you prepare the tools you will use to collect information, here are some tips on how they should be developed and used. (Please note that we do not include journals, portfolios, and tests of student performance in the following list of methods. These are invaluable tools, but they are ways of assessing student progress, rather than tools for program evaluation. The compiled results of student assessment are what are needed for program evaluation, which would require reviewing relevant documents or records.)

In general

Assure all respondents that their responses will be anonymous and that their names won't appear anywhere in the information.

For all of the suggested methods of collecting information, make sure that there is an explanation included of the reason why the information is being collected, i.e. to evaluate the program, not to evaluate the person.

The tools and questions that you use to collect information must be reliable and valid. "Reliable" means that the way you collect information must be accurate and consistent. For example, if different interviewers ask the same question of a student, they should get similar answers. If a person responds differently when asked the same question in a short period of time, you should have concerns about the reliability of the question. "Valid" means that the tool used to collect information actually measures what it is supposed to measure. For example, if you need to find out if students and tutors took part in developing the program's mission, and the interview question asks if they are aware of the program's mission, the question is not valid.

When you are developing your surveys, interview forms, and focus groups, use the following as guidelines:

- arrange items so that the more personal, difficult, or potentially controversial questions come later in the document;
- organize the items by the type of responses, i.e. group the "yes/no" questions together, the satisfaction questions together, etc.; and
- as far as possible, organize the items according to topic, for example, put all of the questions relating to tutor training together.

The total number of questions on a survey or in a focus group should be reasonable in terms of the respondents' time and in terms of handling the amount of information collected. (You could use approximately 15-20 semi-structured questions like those in Appendix B for a 30-minute interview.) If you are collecting information from a large number of people, you may have to limit the number of open-ended questions you ask, because of the time that would be needed to compile and analyze the information.

When preparing forms, use a font and size that is easy to read. Don't split questions between pages. Put questions in a different font or style so that they stand out from the instructions or the response categories.

Finally, when you are preparing your tools to collect information, make sure that you develop and include questions that will provide information for the items you added in Appendix A under "other."

Document review

"Document review" is suggested as the method of collecting information for several standards in Appendix A. Reviewing documents involves looking at secondary data, in other words, information that has already been collected for another purpose and recorded in a text document or computer file. In many cases reviewing documents is sufficient for many information needs, and collecting information in other ways is not necessary.

Documents might include program records, reports, letters, memo, e-mail, training materials, and student records. Having information documented is not only important for evaluation, but for comparing a new approach to what has happened in the past.

Documents could be reviewed by an evaluation team member, aided if necessary by staff. Remember to consider confidentiality issues when deciding on who is going to review documents; you may want to prepare a contract with the person that addresses the need to keep information confidential.

Observation

Viewing events and actions of people is useful as a method of collecting information when the information required has not been previously collected and is not likely to be available through survey, interview, or focus group. In writing a description of what is being observed, the evaluator is making a judgment about the nature and quality of the event. The descriptions must be factual, accurate, and not cluttered by irrelevant details.

Like individual interviews, observation is more time consuming than other methods of collecting information, and therefore is only recommended a few times in Appendix A. It is, of course, a very useful method of collecting information, as it yields immediate and concrete information. (Seeing is believing!)

As with doing interviews (described below), you can decide on the number of observations to make in different ways. One is to use the criteria described in that section, and the other is to use 30% as a rule of thumb (i.e. observe 30% of your student-tutor pairs), with a minimum of 10 observations for any particular standard.

There are different ways of doing observation, including "onlooker" and "participant" observation. Both are respected methods, but participant observation requires a great deal of training and is not recommended here. As an onlooker, you should refrain from being drawn into the tutoring session in the way of providing advice, demonstrating techniques, etc. The idea is to see the extent to which the activities taking place are meeting the standard.

Record the names of the student and tutor only to keep track of who has and hasn't been observed. The names won't be included when the information is compiled.

Surveys

Surveys are questionnaires that are mailed out or distributed for people to fill out independently. For example, you may include a tutor survey in your newsletter, or hand it out to tutors when they come in to meet with their student. They should be returned in such a way that respondents can remain anonymous, such as having a stamped, self-addressed envelope included, or a box set up in the tutoring area, rather than people handing it to staff.

Surveys could be used with tutors, board/council/committee members, and community partners. They are not the best choice for getting information from students because of the reading and writing involved. They could also be used to obtain staff views if there are enough staff in a program to merit a survey.

How many surveys do you need to send out? It depends how statistically reliable you want your findings to be. In sending surveys out to a *sample* of the group you're surveying, if you're dealing with a group of 10, 40, 75 or 150, the sample size would need to be 9, 36, 62, and 108 respectively to provide a 95% confidence level within 5% degree of accuracy. These sample sizes represent the number of 'completed returns' that would be required. Obviously, this level of scientific rigour in research is not likely to be feasible in the context of a volunteer literacy program. It's recommended, therefore, that if you use a survey you send it out to all of the members of that group, i.e. tutors, board members, etc.

Interviews

Face-to-face interviews could be used with students, as could telephone interviews if appropriate. The interviews should be conducted by someone other than the student's own tutor or the program staff, so that the students being interviewed could feel free to express their views of the program and their tutors. This could be another tutor, a board/council/committee member, an evaluation team member, or a person from a partner agency. ESL students may need a family member to interpret, or a bilingual interviewer, if either of these is possible.

Interviews can also be used with board/council/committee members, community members, and other participants. Interviews are much more time consuming than other ways of collecting information, so you may prefer to just use them for students.

How many people do you interview? As with surveys, the small number of respondents in volunteer literacy programs makes it difficult to come up with a meaningful number for a sample. At the same time, interviewing all of the students, for example, would be too time consuming for many programs. One way to decide would be to develop certain criteria for who gets interviewed, and ensure that your criteria cover all of the different types of students you have in your program, such as male/female, under 35/over 35, employed/unemployed, work-oriented/school-oriented, and so on. You would select one student for each criterion, and interview them.

Another way of deciding how many people to interview is to use 30% as a rule of thumb. In programs with ten or fewer students, interview all of them. (Small programs would not be able to generalize about their services from interviewing one to three students.)

Focus groups

A focus group is a group of people who are selected because they are knowledgeable about the subject being investigated. A focus group is generally made up of 6 - 10 people who are similar in some important way, for example, a group of students, a group of tutors, etc. Focus groups are different from discussion groups in that they are brought together to focus on specific questions or topics. The questions in Appendix B can be used to guide discussion in a focus group, but the information generated will likely be more in depth than you would get using a survey or interview.

Focus groups could be designed for any or all of the above groups, to confirm or add to the results of surveys or interviews. They should be conducted by someone who is not known by focus groups participants, again to allow the participants to speak freely. Such a person might be a member of the evaluation team or a member of the community. The per-

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son leading the focus group should have some facilitation skills that would help to manage difficult participants, encourage reluctant participants, and record information while at the same time asking questions and keeping the group focussed.

It is very important to use a set of "ground rules" with focus groups. This can prevent difficult or awkward situations from arising during the discussion, and helps to make expectations of group members clear. Typical ground rules include items such as keeping all information discussed confidential, treating everyone with respect, allowing all members of the group to participate, agreeing on what important words mean, asking for clarification if necessary, listening to everyone's opinions, allowing for disagreement, and staying focused and on time.

Reviewing current methods

Depending on what evaluation practices already exist in your program, there may be existing methods that you can continue to use to collect information.

Instructions: Review the surveys, questionnaires, focus group questions, or other tools for collecting information that your program is currently using for evaluation. Will they work for answering your selected evaluation questions? You may want to use them as they are, revise them, or prepare tools by using the items included in this document (see below).

Note that if you develop your own surveys, etc., you will want to make sure that you can relate the collected information back to the evaluation questions it is meant to address. Each item on the surveys, questionnaires, etc. should be coded accordingly. For example, an item on your questionnaire for tutors might ask them whether they feel adequately supported (evaluation question #4 in Step 2). This question number should be written on the survey, etc. next to the item so that information can be easily organized according to evaluation question as information comes in. (You will find references to resources on designing surveys and other data collection instruments in the Bibliography in Appendix F.)

> "This is the first time evaluation has been done by a committee, rather than the coordinator alone, for this program. Having more people involved in the process helps to ensure objectivity."
>
> -- pilot site coordinator

Reviewing relevant documents

Instructions: Review your selections in Appendix A where "document review" is a selected method of collecting information. List the standard selections from "Program Operations" in the following chart, and as you review the relevant documents, summarize the documentation in terms of how it relates to the standard. For "Program Results" questions, use the worksheets included at the back of Appendix A (pp. 92 - 99) to record information.

List evaluation question/ standard	**Summarize the documentation in relation to the evaluation question/standard**
example: 4.4 The program provides initial tutor training in at least the following areas....	*The outline of initial tutor training shows that the training includes everything mentioned in the standard except for an introduction to literacy.*

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List evaluation question/ standard	Summarize the documentation in relation to the evaluation question/standard

(Photocopy and save original)

Completing observations

Instructions: Review your selections in Appendix A where "observation" is the selected method of collecting information. List the standards in the following chart. Explain to the student and tutor being observed that you are collecting information to see how well the literacy program is working. Ask them if they mind if you sit in on their session for half an hour. Do not tell them which standards you are making observations for. Remind them that they are not being evaluated, the program is.

Try to be as unobtrusive as possible. Complete the following chart.

Date	Who	List evaluation question/ standard	Describe what is observed
Mar. 3/99	*Joe & Jim*	*example: 3.12 The tutor uses instructional methods that enable the student to apply the skills being learned.*	• *after the tutor explained and demonstrated how word patterns work, the student and tutor practiced combining different consonant sounds with rhyming endings* • *the student used a copy of an experience story to circle words with the same word pattern*

(Photocopy and save original)

Date	Who	List evaluation question/ standard	Describe what is observed

(Photocopy and save original)

Preparing surveys, interviews, and focus group questions

In this section you will prepare the documents you need to conduct surveys, interviews, and focus groups. There is a list of "items" or questions that you can use to create these documents in Appendix B, as well as instructions to include with each tool. All you need to do is to find the items in Appendix B that correspond to the selections you made in Appendix A.

Example: The evaluation team made these choices in reviewing Appendix A:

Standards	**Choose at least one indicator unless otherwise noted**	**Possible sources of information**	**Recommended methods**	**Date**
4.2 The program has clearly written and realistic job descriptions for its tutors. ✓	• existence of job descriptions ✓ PLUS • tutor feedback ✓	• job descriptions • tutors	• document review •interview, survey, focus group	

The team wants to use a survey to get tutors' feedback on tutor job descriptions. This is #4.2 in the standards, so in Appendix B the team looks up the items in the "Tutor" items that correspond to #4.2 (The standard reference is shown in brackets after each question):

"In your opinion, is the tutor job description clearly written? (4.2)"

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ________________________________

This is one of two items corresponding to #4.2. Both of these items would be used on the tutor survey. The team would continue to find all of the items in Appendix B that address the standards and Program Results questions they have chosen, where "survey," "interview," or "focus group" is the method of collecting information.

As noted above, make sure that you keep the reference to the evaluation question and standard ("4.2" in our example) with each item on the survey, focus group, etc. so it's easy to relate the collected information back to the evaluation question.

Instructions: Using the items and instructions provided in Appendix B, prepare the tools you need to collect information from students, tutors, or other program participants, according to your selections in Appendix A. There is an example of a tutor survey on the following page.

TUTOR SURVEY (Example)

Instructions: Please take a few moments to complete this survey, and return it to the program no later than April 15. (Use the stamped envelope provided, or drop it off at the program office.) You do not need to put your name on the survey.

Listed below are seven questions that will help us to evaluate our program and its services. Circle the most appropriate answer, and include an explanation wherever possible. Thank you!

1. Did you get useful lesson-planning information from your student's initial assessment? (3.3)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ______________________________

____

____

2. In what ways does your student participate in defining and revisiting his or her own goals? (3.6)

Please describe ______________________________

____

____

3. In what ways does your student participate in his/her assessments? These include assessments during the program and, if possible, when the student leaves the program. (3.8)

Please describe ______________________________

____

____

4. In your opinion, is the tutor job description clearly written? (4.2)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ______________________________

____

5. In your opinion, is the tutor job description realistic? (4.2)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ______________________________

____

page 1 of 2

Testing the tools

Before you begin to use the different tools you've developed to collect information, it's important to practise with them to make sure they will work smoothly. You can do this by having some of your evaluation team members or program volunteers test the surveys, etc. on each other. In the case of interviews, it would be a good idea to have the same people who will be conducting the interviews test the tools.

When testing the information gathering tools, have people take turns reading the instructions and asking questions of each other. Ask them to give feedback on the following:

- Is the wording clear and unambiguous?
- Do any of the questions make them feel uncomfortable?
- Do they get the answers they need? (Does the tool measure what it is supposed to measure?)
- Will people be able to follow the instructions?
- Does the format make the document easy to use?
- Are there any typographical errors or spelling mistakes?

The items contained in Appendix B have been extensively tested with literacy coordinators and other program participants. If you find that any of these items are difficult to use, please let the LCA know.

Based on what happens when your information gathering tools are tested, you may need to revise your questions and format.

One of the pilot sites asked five students to fill in a student survey as a means of testing it. They were asked to tell the coordinator if there were any points that were not clear. No one asked questions or made comments about the questionnaire. However, a review of the responses indicated several problems; students misread words and the results were therefore of limited use.

Filling in a survey is an authentic reading and writing task for students, but this coordinator suggests using a survey with a group of students, and having a staff person or volunteer read and clarify the questions.

Distributing surveys, conducting interviews, and holding focus groups

By this point in the evaluation process, the tasks, roles, timelines, and tools should be developed and in place for gathering the information you need to answer your evaluation questions.

Information will be collected over the program year or cycle. Keeping your information well organized will save time and effort when it comes to interpreting the information and coming to conclusions about your program. Make sure you have clearly labelled files for information collected from students, from tutors, etc. Ensure that all information is dated, and the name of the person who collected the information is recorded in case clarification is needed.

It is also important to keep track of your information collection activities. For example, with mail surveys, there should be a log of how many surveys were mailed out and how many were returned. You should also record how many telephone or face-to-face interviews were attempted and how many were completed.

There is no real standard for response rates for any of these information collection methods. The acceptable level of response depends on, among other things, the questions asked, the type of tool used, the design of the tool, who is responding, and how long people have to respond. If your response rate is very low, consider trying to get the information using a different kind of method, contacting those who didn't participate (if this is known), or offering incentives for participating.

Instructions: Review your selections in Step 2 where "survey," "interview," or "focus group" are the selected methods of collecting information. Using the workplan completed in Step 2 and the information provided earlier in this section, collect the information required using the tools you have prepared.

Step 4 Interpreting and Using Your Findings

Purpose of Step 4

In Step 3, you used one or more methods for collecting information about your program. As that information was collected, you organized the information by putting it into file folders labelled *"Student," "Tutor," etc.* The next step is to summarize and interpret that information, and then draw conclusions that you can use for program development and accountability.

Why it's useful

When this tool was piloted, coordinators reported that they found Step 4 useful because:

- the charts provided to organize information were helpful;
- it helped to identify the strengths and concerns of program members; and
- it generated ideas on how to present findings to stakeholders.

For an example of a program's experience in using Step 4, please see the case study on page 144.

How much time does it take?

It took the pilot site programs an average of seven hours to complete Step 4.

Compiling the information

For each respondent type (student, tutor, etc.) and each information collection tool (interview, survey, etc.), list the responses to each item. If the item is a closed-ended question (yes/no, satisfaction rating, etc.), then tally the number of responses. If the response is to an open-ended question ("please explain," "In what ways...," etc.), list the responses, except if they are reasonably similar, in which case you can list it once and then tally the number of times it appears.

As you are tallying responses, be sure to note the total number so that you can calculate averages later in the process.

example: Tutor Survey

4. In your opinion, is the tutor job description clearly written? (4.2)
Rating scale: (15 responses in total)

- 11 x "5" (very satisfied)
- 4 x "4"

Comments:

- the section on activities and the program philosophy could be clearer
- very clear (7 responses)

5. In your opinion, is the tutor job description realistic? (4.2)
Rating scale: (15 responses in total)

- 9 x "3"
- 5 x "2"
- 1 x "1" (not at all satisfied)

Comments:

- it seems to imply that we work with our students in our homes!
- much of the information seems out of date (4 comments)

As you're compiling information, avoid identifying people by name or by any other means. The anonymity you promised people while collecting the information needs to be maintained.

> One pilot site coordinator found that the easiest way to compile information was to use a blank survey form and tick off the responses beside each 1 - 5 scale item. She had put the tutor, student, and administration surveys on the computer and just typed all of the comments under each question.

Summarizing the information

To summarize the information that you've collected, you need to summarize responses to closed questions by coming up with an average for the rating scale responses. You'll also need to summarize comments that were made, and note how many different respondents commented in a similar way.

Instructions: Using the tallies that you made in "compiling information," above, calculate the average response for each rating scale question.

example: Tutor Survey

4. In your opinion, is the tutor job description clearly written? (4.2)
(11 x 5) + (4 x 4) = 71

71 ÷ 15 responses in total = 4.7

5. In your opinion, is the tutor job description realistic? (4.2)
(9 x 3) + (5 x 2) + (1 x 1) = 38

38 ÷ 15 = 2.5

Therefore, the average responses to these questions were 4.7 and 2.5 respectively, on a scale of 1 to 5.

Instructions: For longer descriptive responses review all of the information relating to a questionnaire item, focus group topic, etc. As you're reviewing the information, make a note of patterns, themes, or categories that you start to see. Once you've finished reading the information through once, think of a code word for each of those themes or categories, such as "support," "access," etc. Write a brief definition for each code word, such as "support from program staff," for "support" and "access to program, including hours of operation, location" for "access." Go back to the information and write the code word beside related pieces of text. Then summarize the information under each code heading.

Example of assigning codes, code definitions, and a summary of open-ended information after coding:

7. In what ways does your student participate in his/her assessments? (3.8)

change

A. The way that Ellen's progress in the program is assessed seems to have more to do with *how* she uses language than measuring *how much*

she knows about language. We ask her to tell us about what she's learned
and how she's using it, rather than testing her on grammar, phonics, or
spelling. One of Ellen's goals that we've been working towards is to
improve her reading and writing so she could help her daughter do better
content at school. Part of her assessment last month was to see how well she
could read a report card and write a note to the teacher. Ellen sees herself
partnership as a partner in her learning, and that includes in her assessments.

B. He's asked for his opinion about what he's learned, not just tested.
change He's asked if anything's changed outside the program because of what
he's learned. If he doesn't think a question in the assessment interview
content has anything to do with him, we explain why it's there.

Code definitions
content: assessment is related to instructional content
change: student describes changes taking place
partnership: the student views the assessment as an extension of the tutor-student relationship

Change	Content	Partnership
student describes changes in skills (2)	assessment related to goals, instruction	student sees herself as an equal in the assessment
	student can question content of assessment	

It's important to simply summarize and tally information at this point, and not to interpret or include your views with those of your information sources. (Keeping track of your thoughts in a separate document is fine, but you want to avoid a situation where your comments could be confused with responses from students, tutors, etc.)

As you're working with the collected information, remember that although you need to summarize descriptive or qualitative information in order to gain an overall picture of your program, it is usually effective to use anecdotes and quotes, especially of students' or tutors' accounts of the program, when you report your findings to your stakeholders.

Considering additional factors

Instructions: Before using the summarized information to address standards and answer evaluation questions, consider any factors that contributed to or impeded the program's success during this program cycle. These may be things that happened outside of the program's control, as in the example below for "impeding factors," but which could be important in reaching your conclusions about your program.

Information needed	Description
contributing factors	*(Example: The regional health authority has recognized literacy as a priority in its prevention campaign for 1998-99, which has increased our credibility in the community.)*
impeding factors	*(Example: Because of the transient nature of the population, many students do not stay in the program more than 4 - 6 weeks.)*

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Determining whether you are achieving the standards you selected

This is the point in the evaluation process where you start to interpret the information that you've collected, compiled and summarized. Applying the information to the standards, and later to the evaluation questions, involves making decisions about and judging what goes on in your program; in other words, evaluating it. Because it is natural for people to bring their biases to the job of interpreting information, it is recommended that the task be shared by evaluation team members rather than being done by one individual.

How will you know if your program is achieving a standard? As mentioned above, evaluation involves making judgments and a certain degree of subjectivity. However, where 5-point rating scales are used to determine satisfaction, frequency of an activity, etc., a rating of less than 3 could indicate that more development is needed in that area before the program could be considered to be achieving that standard. Before making that decision, of course, you would need to look at other information collected during the evaluation, including comments written in response to open-ended questions, document reviews, etc.

Instructions: Use the form on the next page. For each standard selected, list the summarized information. Identify the respondent group (student, tutor, etc.) Make sure you include the responses to all methods of collecting information: document review on pp. 43 - 44, observations on pp. 45 - 46, surveys, interviews, focus groups, etc.

Standard	**Summarized information**	**Are we achieving the standard?**	**What needs to happen?**
example: 4.2 The program has clearly written and realistic job descriptions for its tutors.	*Document review: a job description is on file, but is not current* *Tutors survey (scale of 1-5): average of 4.7 - clearly written average of 2.5 - realistic*	*No*	*update the tutor job description*
example: 4.6 The program assesses the effectiveness of its tutor training.	*Document review: the feedback collected after training sessions is on file*	*Yes*	*n/a*

Standard	Summarized information	Are we achieving the standard?	What needs to happen?

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Answering your evaluation questions

Instructions: For every evaluation question that you selected in "Program Operations" in Step 2, list the standards that have been achieved, as well as those that haven't been achieved. If there are aspects of your program's context (Step 1) or additional factors (Step 4) that affect whether or not a standard has been achieved, be sure to note them. For every evaluation question in "Program Results" that you selected, provide a summary of the information.

Example:

3. Our program delivers programming that addresses the needs of the individual in that:

- the program provides each student with appropriate initial assessment;
- each student participates in defining and revisiting his/her own goals;
- methods used enable the student to apply the skills being used.

We need to:

- review our on-going and exit assessment practices and adapt them to the needs of our students. (Note: due to the nature of employment in the area, students often leave the program with little or no notice, which makes assessment difficult.)

4. Our program provides quality tutoring in that:

- we assess the effectiveness of our tutor training;
- staff help tutors to evaluate their effectiveness and support them in improving their techniques if necessary.

We need to:

- update our tutor job description;
- add an introduction to literacy to our initial tutor training workshop.

5. Our program has sound administration in that:

- we have a clearly defined relationship with our hosting authority;
- our fiscal management includes an annual budget approved by the advisory committee, regular reports to our advisory committee on our financial status, and an annual financial review.

7. The following services were delivered:

- 25 students participated for a total of 1250 hours
- 23 tutors participated for a total of 1525 hours
- 7 other volunteers participated for a total of 75 hours
- 2 presentations on literacy were made to community agencies

Student satisfaction with the program includes:

- The program teaches students what they need to learn:
  - average response of 4.2 on a scale of 1 - 5
- Students can use what they learned in their daily life.
  - average response of 3.9 on a scale of 1 - 5
- The quality of the services provided was good.
  - average response of 4.6 on a scale of 1 - 5
- The program will help students to achieve their goals.
  - average response of 4.3 on a scale of 1 - 5
- Overall, students are satisfied with this program.
  - average response of 4.6 on a scale of 1 - 5

Making conclusions about your program

Now that you have compiled and summarized the information you collected during the evaluation, and used the information to look at your program in relation to the standards and the evaluation questions, you need to draw conclusions about your program. What do your evaluation findings say about your program as a whole? Conclusions could focus on such things as:

- What are the program's strengths?
- Are there areas where program practice could be improved?
- What are the results (expected and unexpected) of the program?
- Is the program meeting its goals?

Depending on the audiences for your evaluation, you may want to draw different things out in your conclusions. For example, you may wish to use Program Results information (see pp. 92 - 99) to emphasize the value of the program (in volunteer hours, etc.) for the purposes of garnering local support for your program.

Your conclusions should indicate what impact your program had on its participants. One of the items in Program Results question #7, for example, has to do with whether the program will help students to achieve their goals. Your conclusions might then state, "Results show that 72% of our students were very satisfied that the program will help them to achieve their goals."

Instructions: Develop conclusions based on what you have learned about your program during this evaluation. Then, using these conclusions, decide on follow-up actions or changes to the program. Make sure these changes are incorporated into program planning.

One pilot site's experience in drawing conclusions: "We got our evaluation team together again and discussed each standard and the information gathered. It was such a positive experience to have confirmation of our success in our community."

Informing others

Instructions: Looking at the audiences that you identified in Step 2, along with the reasons why they would need evaluation information, decide how you will inform them of relevant evaluation findings and any changes to the program resulting from the evaluation.

Depending on your program and the needs of your stakeholders, information about the evaluation can be communicated:

- through an article in the program newsletter;
- in a written report;
- in a presentation; and/or
- in an informal discussion.

Once again, in addition to the summarized information and conclusions that your evaluation team has come to about your program, be sure to include some quotes from your program participants in your evaluation reports. Their stories and anecdotal comments are powerful ways of communicating the program's successes.

If a written evaluation report is prepared, it should be circulated to the evaluation team for feedback before being distributed.

Celebrate!

Finally, an essential component of program evaluation should be for participants to celebrate the program's accomplishments. A very important result of having standards for literacy programs should be to affirm the excellent work currently being done in volunteer literacy programs across this province. The following story was offered by a literacy coordinator during the 1996 ALPS consultations. It's just one example of why we should celebrate.

> *"A fortyish man who had to learn from a Grade 1 level called me on Christmas morning to tell me he had read "'Twas The Night Before Christmas" to his children, the first time he had ever read to them. They were both in their late teens."*

Appendix A Applying the standards and evaluating program results

Purpose of Appendix A

The tables in Appendix A are to be used as part of Step 2, when you select the standards that you are going to work with to answer the questions you have for this evaluation. (See page 28.) It is very important that you follow the instructions found in Step 2 so that you know how much you can include in your evaluation given the time and resources you have available.

There are also tables at the back of this appendix that are to be used in Step 2 when you are selecting items from Program Results questions #7 - 9 (see page 29), and in Step 3 when you are collecting information to answer those questions.

Why it's useful

Pilot site programs found Appendix A useful because:

- the tables were easy to follow, and kept the focus on the particular standards the program is working on;
- knowing these tables exist to be used as a follow-up to selecting standards makes this job less daunting;
- there is a good selection of indicators for each standard;
- the example at the end of the appendix was very useful; and
- it was very useful for someone with no experience in program evaluation.

Instructions: Before using these tables, make a photocopy and save these pages as originals. Use your photocopy to make your selections, either by underlining, checking off, or highlighting your selected items. Use the last column to enter the date when the standard was used in program evaluation. (See page 100 for an example of how to use these tables.)

Note: you may find yourself answering "yes" or "no" to the standards as you review them. Try to think in terms of showing support for your answer, as it will make the task of selecting indicators, sources of information, and methods of collecting information much easier.

If you would find it easier to consider the standards in groups within each of the six evaluation questions, refer to Appendix D, where standards are grouped together under good practice statements.

Program Operations Questions

1. In what ways is our program community based?

Standards	Choose at least one indicator unless otherwise noted	Possible sources of information	Recommended methods	Date
1.1 The program assesses the literacy needs of its community at least once every three years.	• presence/absence of needs assessment process • collaboration with other community groups and agencies to gather information on community literacy needs • use of information gathered by other groups and agencies • use of participant knowledge of community needs **PLUS** • frequency of assessment	• records of needs assessment activities • correspondence with community groups and agencies, records of needs assessment activities • records of needs assessment activities • records of needs assessment activities • records of needs assessment activities	• document review • document review • document review • document review • document review	
1.2 Taking into account the program's philosophy, vision, and available resources, the program responds to identified needs with appropriate services.	• match between services offered and community needs • referral agency satisfaction	• results of needs assessment activities, description of services offered • referral agencies	• document review • interview, survey	
1.3 The recruitment process for board, council, or committee members is designed to gain representation from a broad range of community groups and program participants.	• range of contacts made for recruitment purposes • community, student, and volunteer participation on board/council/committee	• reports on recruitment efforts • membership list of board/council/committee, Lit-Link	• document review • document review	

Standards	Choose at least one indicator unless otherwise noted	Possible sources of information	Recommended methods	Date
1.4 The expectations and responsibilities of the board, council, or committee are clearly documented and communicated to members and prospective members.	• content of recruitment and orientation materials for board/council/committee members • board/council/committee member satisfaction PLUS • existence of documented expectations and responsibilities	• minutes, correspondence, outline of orientation • board/council/committee members • minutes, correspondence	• document review • interview, survey, focus group • document review	
1.5 The board, council, or committee is provided with the Literacy Coordinators of Alberta standards for literacy programs and with the expectations of the funder(s).	• distribution of documents • content of orientation	• minutes of meetings • outline of orientation	• document review • document review	
1.6 Working with program staff, the board, council, or committee establishes annual goals and action plans that support the goals of the literacy program.	• staff satisfaction • board/council/committee satisfaction • existence of a planning document that specifies board goals and activities	• paid staff • board/council/committee members • board/council/committee records	• interview, survey, focus group • interview, survey, focus group • document review	
1.7 The program ensures its board, council, or committee receives the support it needs to accomplish its literacy-related goals.	• member satisfaction with support received • existence of support activities	• board/council/committee members • board/annual reports	• interview, survey, focus group • document review	
1.8 The board, council, or committee meets at least two times per year to focus specifically on matters relating to the literacy program.	• issues discussed at meetings PLUS • frequency of meetings	• minutes of meetings • minutes of meetings	• document review • document review	

Standards	**Choose at least one indicator unless otherwise noted**	**Possible sources of information**	**Recommended methods**	**Date**
1.9 The program seeks out partnerships with community organizations and individuals with whom it shares complementary goals.	• number of approaches made to community organizations and individuals about partnerships or joint activities • occurrence of joint activities • use of community resource people or activities in the program	• correspondence with community organizations and individuals • minutes of meetings, reports on joint activities • reports of program activities	• document review • document review • document review	
1.10 The program acts as a community resource for literacy development.	• number of calls from community members requesting information • number of presentations made to community groups or agencies • use of resource library by community members • attendance at literacy program workshops open to the community	• records of inquiries, staff • board/annual reports • library records • workshop attendance records	• document review, interview, survey • document review • document review • document review	
1.11 The program reviews its community partnerships annually.	• existence of a partnership review process • changes to partnerships based on review **PLUS** • frequency of review	• documents related to reviewing partnerships • reports, planning documents • board/annual reports	• document review • document review • document review	

Standards	**Choose at least one indicator unless otherwise noted**	**Possible sources of information**	**Recommended methods**	**Date**
1.12 Promotional activities include efforts to reach potential students and tutors and a broad range of community groups.	• use of former learners' and tutors' experiences in creating awareness activities • use of strategies for reaching community groups and potential students and volunteers	• anecdotal records, planning documents • recruitment-related documents	• document review • document review	
1.13 The program recognizes community support, and reviews its methods for recognizing its supporters each year.	• existence of recognition activities • changes in recognition practices due to review process **PLUS** • frequency of review	• board/annual reports • records of events, reports, planning documents, minutes • board/annual report	• document review • document review • document review	
other				

2. In what ways does our program have a relevant and applied philosophy?

Standards	Choose at least one indicator unless otherwise noted	Possible sources of information	Recommended methods	Date
2.1 The program ensures that all aspects of program practice are consistent with its philosophy and vision.	• match between program goals and philosophy **PLUS** • match between program services and operations and philosophy	• planning documents, philosophy-related documents, board/council/ committee members • participants, philosophy-related documents	• document review, interview, survey, focus group • interview, survey, document review, focus group, observation	
2.2 Philosophy- and vision-related documents are written in plain language.	• adherence to plain language guidelines • readability of documents	• philosophy, plain language guidelines (e.g. Plain Language Please) • philosophy, vision-related documents, readability instruments (e.g. Fry Graph)	• document review • document review, readability assessment	
2.3 The program's philosophy and vision are communicated to all new staff, students and volunteers in ways that are easy to understand.	• ways the philosophy and vision are shared • content of orientation	• participants • orientation outline	• interview, survey, focus group • document review	
2.4 Philosophy-related statements reflect the literacy needs of the community.	• correlation between philosophy, etc. and identified literacy needs • satisfaction of community representatives on the board/council/committee with program's philosophy	• results of needs assessment activities, documents relating to philosophy • board/council/ committee members	• document review • interview, survey, focus group	

Standards	Choose at least one indicator unless otherwise noted	Possible sources of information	Recommended methods	Date
2.5 The program has documented mission and values statements.	• existence of mission, values documents	• documents	• document review	
2.6 The program offers staff, students, and volunteers the opportunity for input when developing its vision, mission, and values statements.	• participant satisfaction with opportunity to give input • ways in which participants are given opportunities for input	• participants • program development records and reports	• interview, survey, focus group • document review	
2.7 At least every three years, the program offers staff, students and volunteers the opportunity for input when reviewing the vision, mission, and values statements.	• participant satisfaction with opportunity to give input • ways in which participants are given opportunities for input PLUS • frequency of review	• participants • program development records • planning meeting minutes	• interview, survey, focus group • document review • document review	
other				

3. In what ways do we deliver programming that addresses the needs of the individual?

Standards	**Choose at least one indicator unless otherwise noted**	**Possible sources of information**	**Recommended methods**	**Date**
3.1 The program provides each student with a confidential interview as soon as possible after he or she contacts the program.	• timing and location of interviews PLUS • handling of participant information	• participant records, coordinator's agenda • staff, staff performance appraisal	• document review • interview, focus group, document review	
3.2 The interview is used primarily to explain the program's services and to discuss any expectations the student may have.	• content of interview	• outline of interview process, notes taken during interview	• document review	
3.3 The program provides each student with an initial assessment which: • is student-centered and participatory; • helps the student to set realistic literacy-related goals; • provides useful information for the student and for initial lesson planning; • establishes a baseline for determining progress.	• ways in which students participate PLUS • existence of student goals PLUS • usefulness of information collected PLUS • existence of baseline data	• assessment records, staff • assessment records, student files • assessment records, students, tutors • assessment records	• document review, interview • document review • document review, interview, survey, focus group • document review	
3.4 A staff member clearly explains the student's basic responsibilities and asks him or her to make a commitment to those responsibilities.	• content of orientation	• orientation outline, notes taken during orientation	• document review	

Standards	**Choose at least one indicator unless otherwise noted**	**Possible sources of information**	**Recommended methods**	**Date**
3.5 A staff member or volunteer introduces the student to the program's facilities and operations.	• content of orientation	• outline of orientation	• document review	
3.6 Each student participates in defining and revisiting his or her own goals.	• ways in which students participate in defining and revisiting their goals • student satisfaction with goal-setting process	• student records, tutors, paid staff • students	• document review, focus group, observation, survey, interview • interview, survey, focus group	
3.7 The student's goals form the focus of lesson planning and the basis for on-going and exit assessment.	• correlation between student goals, lesson plans, and assessments • student satisfaction with relevance of lessons and assessments	• student records • students	• document review • interview, survey, focus group	

Standards	**Choose at least one indicator unless otherwise noted**	**Possible sources of information**	**Recommended methods**	**Date**
3.8 The program provides each student with ongoing and, if possible, exit assessment which: • is student-centered and participatory; • uses appropriate formal and/or informal assessment methods; • is used to record gains in literacy development as well as in related areas such as independence and self-esteem; • provides information that can be used by both tutors and students to review progress and make further lesson plans; • is done in such a way that results can be aggregated across students and used in program evaluation.	• ways in which students participate	• assessment records, tutors, staff	• document review, observation, focus group, survey	
	• amount and quality of support and instruction on self assessment provided to students	• workshop outlines, student records	• document review	
	PLUS			
	• variety of assessment tools and techniques used	• assessment records	• document review	
	PLUS			
	• range of student competency areas assessed	• assessment records	• document review	
	PLUS AT LEAST ONE OF:			
	• relevance to students and tutors of information collected	• students, tutors	• interview, survey, focus group	
	• use of assessment in developing lesson plans	• lesson plans, tutors	• document review, interview, survey, focus group	
	PLUS			
	• use of assessment information in program evaluation	• program evaluation documents	• document review	
3.9 The program uses the results of the initial interview and assessment to match the student with a tutor.	• evidence of use of information in matching the student with a tutor	• student records, Lit-Link	• document review	
3.10 The tutor and student meet at least once per week.	• frequency of tutoring sessions	• tutor logs, student records, Lit-Link	• document review	

Standards	Choose at least one indicator unless otherwise noted	Possible sources of information	Recommended methods	Date
3.11 The tutor uses instructional strategies and content that are appropriate for the student's goals, skills, and interests.	• evidence of use of initial assessment results in tutor planning • student satisfaction with the relevance of lessons	• tutor planning documents • students	• document review • interview, survey, focus group	
3.12 The tutor uses instructional methods that enable the student to apply the skills being learned.	• tutoring session activities	• tutor logs, lesson plans, tutor-student pair	• document review, observation	
3.13 A student leaving the program is encouraged to return if or when his or her future goals include further literacy development.	• content of exit interview • occurrence of invitation to return	• outline of interview, student records • student records, tutor logs	• document review • document review	
3.14 Staff members provide follow-up during the first month of tutoring and continue to be available when the student has questions or concerns.	• timing of follow-up **PLUS** • student satisfaction with staff availability	• student records • students	• document review • interview, survey, focus group	
3.15 Staff contact each student at least once every three months.	• frequency of contact	• student records	• document review	
3.16 The program helps students find needed support services, both within and outside the program.	• number and type of internal support services available • student satisfaction with internal support services **PLUS AT LEAST ONE OF:** • number and type of external referrals offered • student satisfaction with referral information	• student orientation materials • students • student records, Lit-Link • students	• document review • interview, survey, focus group • document review • interview, survey, focus group	

Standards	**Choose at least one indicator unless otherwise noted**	**Possible sources of information**	**Recommended methods**	**Date**
3.17 Current information on other education and training programs is available and students are assisted in using it.	• presence/absence of current information	• pamphlets, program descriptions and calendars, registration forms	• document review	
	• staff knowledge & uses of current information	• staff, staff performance appraisals	• interview, document review	
	• student satisfaction with support received	• students	• interview, survey, focus group	
3.18 Both staff and tutor give the student frequent praise and positive reinforcement.	• frequency of praise and reinforcement	• staff, tutor	• observations	
	• student satisfaction with supportive environment	• students	• interview, survey, focus group	
3.19 The program honours each student's efforts and achievements, in an appropriate manner, at least once a year.	• type of recognition used	• planning documents, reports	• document review	
	• student satisfaction with recognition	• students	• interview, survey, focus group	
	PLUS • frequency of events	• board/annual report	• document review	
other				

4. In what ways are we providing quality tutoring?

Standards	**Choose at least one indicator unless otherwise noted**	**Possible sources of information**	**Recommended methods**	**Date**
4.1 In recruiting tutors, the program clearly outlines the qualifications required and screens potential tutors to ensure they meet those qualifications.	• existence of a document describing desired qualifications PLUS • existence of screening process	• recruitment materials • outline of screening process, interview questions	• document review • document review	
4.2 The program has clearly written and realistic job descriptions for its tutors.	• existence of job descriptions PLUS • tutor feedback	• job descriptions • tutors	• document review •interview, survey, focus group	
4.3 An interview is used primarily to discuss the tutor's expectations and to explain the program's requirements.	• content of interview	• outline of interview, notes taken during interview	• document review	
4.4 The program provides initial tutor training in at least the following areas: • introduction to literacy • student-centred approaches, methods and strategies in reading, writing, and/or math • available resources and support • tutor roles and responsibilities.	• content of training workshops • tutor satisfaction with content of initial training	• outline of initial training workshops • tutors	• document review • interview, survey, focus group	

Standards	Choose at least one indicator unless otherwise noted	Possible sources of information	Recommended methods	Date
4.5 The program assesses the on-going training needs of its tutors and provides training to meet those needs.	• use of process to assess needs • match between requests for training and workshops offered • tutor satisfaction with training provided	• tools used for assessing needs • results of assessments, outlines and records of workshops • tutors	• document review • document review • interview, survey, focus group	
4.6 The program assesses the effectiveness of its tutor training.	• presence or absence of training evaluation/feedback opportunities • changes in training due to assessing effectiveness	• records of program activities, evaluation/feedback instruments • workshop outlines	• document review • document review	
4.7 Staff maintain contact with tutors who are not yet matched with a student.	• occurrence of contacts	• tutor records, Lit-Link	• document review	
4.8 Staff members provide follow-up during the first month of tutoring and continue to be available when the tutor has questions or concerns.	• timing of follow-up PLUS • tutor satisfaction with staff availability	• tutor records, Lit-Link • tutors	• document review • interview, survey, focus group	
4.9 Staff contact each tutor at least once every 3 months.	• frequency of contact	• tutor records, Lit-Link	• document review	
4.10 Staff help tutors with resource materials as needed.	• tutor satisfaction	• tutors	• interview, survey, focus group	
4.11 Staff help tutors evaluate the effectiveness of their tutoring and support them in improving their techniques as necessary.	• tutor satisfaction • staff satisfaction with opportunities and ability to assist tutors in improving their effectiveness	• tutors • paid staff	• interview, survey, focus group • interview, survey, focus group	

Standards	**Choose at least one indicator unless otherwise noted**	**Possible sources of information**	**Recommended methods**	**Date**
4.12 The program provides opportunities for tutors to network.	• tutor satisfaction • occurrence of networking opportunities	• tutors • board/annual reports	• interview, survey, focus group • document review	
4.13 Staff informally acknowledge the efforts of tutors on a regular basis by showing them that they are valued and appreciated.	• tutor satisfaction	• tutors	• interview, survey, focus group	
4.14 At least once a year, the program explicitly recognizes the contributions of its tutors.	• tutor satisfaction • existence of recognition activities PLUS • frequency of recognition activities	• tutors • board/annual reports • board/annual reports	• interview, survey, focus group • document review • document review	
other				

5. In what ways do we have sound program administration?

Standards	**Choose at least one indicator unless otherwise noted**	**Possible sources of information**	**Recommended methods**	**Date**
5.1 Where a program has a hosting authority, the relationship between it and the literacy program is clearly defined and documented.	• existence of document defining relationship	• organizational documents, statement of governance, orientation materials	• document review	
5.2 Lines of authority within the program are clearly defined and documented.	• existence of document describing lines of authority	• organizational chart, terms of reference, orientation materials	• document review	
5.3 Responsibility for all aspects of the program is clearly defined and documented.	• existence of documents describing responsibilities • content of orientation processes for participants	• job descriptions • orientation outline	• document review • document review	
5.4 The program follows the funding guidelines provided by its funder(s).	• response by funders to funding reports • response to grant applications	• correspondence from funder(s) • correspondence from funder(s)	• document review • document review	

Standards	Choose at least one indicator unless otherwise noted	Possible sources of information	Recommended methods	Date
5.5 The program's fiscal management includes, at minimum, • an annual budget that is approved by the board, advisory council, or appropriate body, • regular reports on the program's financial status to the board or advisory council, and to the coordinator if he/she does not manage the budget, and • an annual review or audit.	• board/council/committee satisfaction with fiscal management PLUS • existence of annual budget, financial reporting process, and annual review or audit	• board/council/ committee members, treasurer's reports • financial records, proposals, minutes, reviewers'/auditor's reports	• interview, survey, focus group, document review • document review	
5.6 The broad qualifications looked for in paid staff, depending on the position they are being hired for, include the following: adult education or training, teaching reading and writing, instructional planning, program planning and administration, volunteer management.	• staff qualifications	• staff resumés, interview questions and responses.	• document review	
5.7 The program clearly outlines the specific qualifications required by its paid staff.	• nature of information provided to potential applicants	• job ads, terms of reference	• document review	
5.8 The program uses comprehensive, clearly written, and realistic job descriptions for all paid staff.	• existence of job descriptions PLUS • staff feedback	• job descriptions • paid staff, staff performance appraisals	• document review • interview, survey, focus group, document review	

Standards	Choose at least one indicator unless otherwise noted	Possible sources of information	Recommended methods	Date
5.9 The program's recruitment strategy includes using clearly outlined qualifications and personal interviews to screen potential volunteer staff.	• existence of documented qualifications **PLUS** • existence of screening process	• recruitment materials • outline of screening process, interview questions	• document review • document review	
5.10 The program uses current, clearly written, and realistic job descriptions for volunteer staff positions.	• existence of job descriptions **PLUS** • volunteer feedback	• job descriptions • evaluation records, volunteer staff	• document review • document review, interview, survey	
5. 11 The program provides all new staff with an orientation to the program's policies, operations, and context.	• content of orientation	• record of program activities, reports, outline of orientation	• document review	
5.12 The program identifies the on-going professional development requirements of staff.	• existence of process to identify training needs	• documents related to assessing training needs, assessment instruments	• document review	

Standards	**Choose at least one indicator unless otherwise noted**	**Possible sources of information**	**Recommended methods**	**Date**
5.13 The program ensures that paid staff have access to relevant initial and on-going training. Depending on their roles in the program, staff training includes the following areas: • teaching reading, writing, and math • volunteer management • assessment techniques and tools • program and office management • building community partnerships • current literacy trends and research.	• number and content of "in-house" training activities • number and content of external professional development opportunities • staff satisfaction with access to relevant training opportunities	• outline of training events, board/annual reports • conference programmes, board/annual reports • paid staff, staff performance appraisals	• document review • document review • interview, focus group, document review	
5.14 The program ensures that volunteer staff have access to initial and ongoing training in areas relevant to their duties.	• number and content of workshops offered • volunteer staff satisfaction	• board/annual report, outline of training events • volunteer staff	• document review • interview, survey, focus group	
5.15 The program monitors the effectiveness of training for paid and volunteer staff.	• presence or absence of training evaluation/feedback opportunities • changes in training due to monitoring effectiveness	• records of program activities, evaluation/feedback instruments • workshop outlines	• document review • document review	

Standards	Choose at least one indicator unless otherwise noted	Possible sources of information	Recommended methods	Date
5.16 Through its links with other literacy organizations at regional and provincial levels, the program provides networking opportunities for its paid staff at least twice a year.	• staff satisfaction **PLUS** • frequency of networking opportunities	• board/annual report •paid staff, staff performance appraisal	• document review • interview, survey, focus group, document review	
5.17 The program's expectations of volunteer staff are clearly defined, documented, and communicated.	• content of initial interview, orientation • volunteer satisfaction **PLUS** • existence of documented expectations	• interview notes, orientation outline • volunteer staff • volunteer policy manual, volunteer handouts	• document review • interview, survey, focus group • document review	
5.18 The program provides volunteer staff with the resources they need to complete their tasks.	• volunteer satisfaction	• volunteer staff	• interview, survey, focus group	
5.19 The program has a means of keeping all volunteers informed.	• availability of information	• newsletters, bulletin boards, records of social events	• document review	
5.20 The program has practices in place to protect the confidential nature of participant records.	• existence of policy on confidentiality **PLUS** • content of training and orientations	• policy-related documents • training, orientation outlines	• document review • document review	
5.21 The program clearly communicates to volunteers, students, and paid staff the program's expectations regarding confidentiality for all program participants.	• content of training and orientations • clarity of expectations	• training, orientation outlines • participants	• document review • survey, interview, focus group	

Standards	Choose at least one indicator unless otherwise noted	Possible sources of information	Recommended methods	Date
5.22 The program's plans for recruiting students and volunteers take into consideration the space and resources available to the program.	• correlation between program resources and recruitment plans	• paid staff, staff performance appraisal	• interview, focus group, document review	
5.23 The coordinator organizes staff time so that both the participants' needs and the program's administrative demands are met within the time available.	• staff satisfaction with time allocations • board/council/committee satisfaction	• staff, staff performance appraisal • board/council/committee members	• interview, survey, focus group, document review • interview, survey, focus group	
5.24 The program uses a sufficient amount of its funding to ensure fair and equitable staff wages.	• correlation between portion of budget spent on staff wages and recommended amounts	• LCA recommendations for salary, financial records	• document review	
5.25 Staff informally acknowledge the efforts of volunteers on a regular basis by showing them that they are valued and appreciated.	• volunteer satisfaction	• volunteers excluding tutors (covered in other section)	• interview, survey, focus group	
5.26 At least once a year, the program explicitly recognizes the contributions of its volunteers.	• volunteer satisfaction • existence of recognition activities PLUS • frequency of recognition activities	• volunteers excluding tutors (covered in other section) • board/annual reports • board/annual report	• interview, survey, focus group • document review • document review	

Standards	Choose at least one indicator unless otherwise noted	Possible sources of information	Recommended methods	Date
5.27 The program has policies and procedures on file that apply to paid staff, volunteers, and students, and reviews them annually.	• existence of policies and procedures	• staff policies and procedures document, volunteer policies and procedures document, student policies and procedures document	• document review	
	PLUS • frequency of review	• board/annual reports	• document review	
5.28 The program keeps up-to-date, relevant participant records.	• staff satisfaction with participant records	• paid staff	• interview, survey, focus group	
	• existence of records	• volunteer application forms, volunteer interview notes and screening reports, attendance records for tutor training, tutor logs, student registration forms and initial assessment results, staff applications/resumés, staff interview notes, staff personnel files, LitLink	• document review	
5.29 Tutors submit records of the tutor-student pairs' activities as required.	• absence or presence of tutor-student activity records	• tutor logs	• document review	

Standards	Choose at least one indicator unless otherwise noted	Possible sources of information	Recommended methods	Date
5.30 Assessment results are recorded in a way that demonstrates the student's progress toward his or her goals and the learning outcomes achieved.	• articulation of progress toward goals **PLUS**	•student interview and/or initial assessment results,tutor logs, on-going assessment results	• document review	
	• articulation of learning outcomes achieved	• student records, on-going assessment results	• document review	
5.31 The program keeps accurate, current financial records on file.	• existence of current financial records **PLUS**	• financial records	• document review	
	• accuracy of records	• financial records, reviewers'/auditor's report	• document review	
5.32 Program staff prepare reports as needed for the purposes of being accountable and of informing the community.	• existence of reports	• annual reports, board reports, news releases, newsletters, minutes of public meetings	• document review	
5.33 The program has a comprehensive, annually reviewed records management plan that outlines • which records to keep and for how long, • who has access to which records, and • proper disposal of records.	• existence of records management plan **PLUS** • frequency of review	• records management plan • board/annual report, record of program activities	• document review • document review	

Standards	Choose at least one indicator unless otherwise noted	Possible sources of information	Recommended methods	Date
5.34 The program provides enough resource materials for every tutor-student pair, and makes the materials available to all participants.	• tutor and student satisfaction with number of resource materials PLUS • satisfaction of participants with availability of resources	• tutors and students • participants	• interview, survey, focus group • interview, survey, focus group	
5.35 Resource materials are relevant to the experience, background, skill levels, and interests of students and tutors.	• student and tutor satisfaction • availability of a range of adult-oriented, culturally diverse literacy materials and tutor resources	• students and tutors • library inventory, Lit-Link	• interview, survey, focus group • document review	
5.36 The program reviews its resource materials annually to ensure that they meet the participants' needs.	• correlation between resource materials and participant needs PLUS • frequency of review	• library inventory, student lesson plans, initial assessments, Lit-Link • documents related to reviewing resources	• document review • document review	
5.37 The program has access to facilities that are safe and inviting for all participants, and that are adequate both for administrative tasks and for working with participants.	• participant satisfaction with facilities	• participants	• interview, survey, focus group, document review	
5.38 The program ensures that staff have access to the office and instructional equipment necessary to carry out their responsibilities.	• staff satisfaction • amount and type of equipment available	• paid staff, staff performance appraisal • inventory of equipment	• interview, focus group, document review • document review	

Standards	Choose at least one indicator unless otherwise noted	Possible sources of information	Recommended methods	Date
other				

6. In what ways is our program effectively planned and evaluated?

Standards	Choose at least one indicator unless otherwise noted	Possible sources of information	Recommended methods	Date
6.1 The program has documented plans for the following program areas, and reviews those plans over a three-year cycle: • assessment of community needs • community partnerships • program promotion and public relations • initial, on-going, and exit assessment of students • student goal setting • student support • tutor/volunteer recruitment, training, and support • staff training and support • program evaluation	• existence of plans PLUS • frequency of review process	• program planning documents • minutes of meetings, records of program activities	• document review • document review	
6.2 The program develops a long-range plan for future growth and direction and reviews that plan at least every three years.	• existence of long-range plan PLUS • frequency of review	• planning documents • minutes, records of program activities	• document review • document review	

Standards	Choose at least one indicator unless otherwise noted	Possible sources of information	Recommended methods	Date
6.3 The program is informed of and incorporates relevant developments in literacy practice into its program planning.	• awareness of promising practice (e.g. STAPLE)	• paid staff, staff performance appraisal	• interview, focus group, document review	
	• participation in professional development opportunities	• board/annual reports, performance appraisals	• document review	
	• availability of relevant journals and new publications	• library inventory, records of loan material, Lit-Link	• document review	
	PLUS • application of learning	• board/annual reports, staff, performance appraisal	• document review, interview, focus group	
6.4 The program uses the results of program evaluation to set goals for the next year.	• integration of evaluation results in planning process	• minutes of planning meetings	• document review	
	• number of planned program changes related to evaluation results	• minutes, planning-related documents	• document review	
6.5 Program evaluation tools are compatible with the program's philosophy, goals, and delivery methods.	• compatibility between evaluation tools and program philosophy, etc.	• evaluation tools, philosophy-related documents, paid staff, board/council/committee members	• document review, interview, survey, focus group	
6.6 The program uses as its key indicator of effectiveness the progress that students make toward their goals.	• content of reports to boards, funders, community	• reports	• document review	
	• content of public relations items	• media releases, articles, brochures	• document review	

Standards	Choose at least one indicator unless otherwise noted	Possible sources of information	Recommended methods	Date
6.7 The program uses a variety of measures, both quantitative and qualitative, throughout the program cycle, to document its success.	• use of measures that collect information in narrative form (e.g. how do students feel they benefit from the program)	• evaluation-related documents, reports, Lit-Link	• document review	
	PLUS • use of measures that collect information in numerical form (e.g. how many students felt they were progressing toward their goals)	• evaluation-related documents, reports	• document review	
	PLUS • timing of evaluation activities	• minutes of evaluation meetings, records of program activities	• document review	
6.8 Program evaluation includes annual performance reviews and self-evaluation of paid staff.	• staff participation in performance reviews and self-evaluation	• performance reviews, personnel records	• document review	
	PLUS • frequency of reviews and self-evaluations	• performance reviews, personnel records	• document review	
6.9 Program planning includes giving participants the opportunity to take part in setting program goals and objectives.	• participant satisfaction with opportunity to give input	• participants	• interview, survey, focus group	
	• ways in which participants are given opportunities for input	• program planning records and reports	• document review	
6.10 The program's evaluation strategies include giving participants the opportunity to take part in evaluating the program's effectiveness.	• participant satisfaction with opportunity to take part in evaluation	• participants	• interview, survey, focus group	
	• ways in which participants are given opportunities for input	• program evaluation records and reports	• document review	

Standards	Choose at least one indicator unless otherwise noted	Possible sources of information	Recommended methods	Date
6.11 The program encourages participants to give feedback on the program at any time.	• existence of opportunities for feedback	• participants	• interview, survey, focus group	
other				

Program Results Questions

Instructions: The tables on the following pages are to be used in Step 2 when you are selecting Program Results questions to include in your evaluation (#7 - 9 on page 29), and in Step 3 when you are collecting information to answer these questions. As explained on page 13, certain pages in this document replace the Participation Summary sent out by Community Programs of Advanced Education and Career Development. Along with pp. 14 - 15, use the following five pages (#7) as "pull-out" sheets to send to Community Programs as well as part of this process of looking at program results. (Be sure to carry relevant information forward into the "Student-Tutor Participation Summary" on page 96, and to save a copy of the completed "pull-out" sheets for your records.)

Question #7 in the following chart asks for very specific information about the adult tutoring component of your program. If you offer other services, you will find space at the end of #7 to include them.

(Submit pp. 14 - 15 and pp. 92 - 96 to Community Programs.)

Program cycle being evaluated. ____________________

(e.g. Sept. 1/99 - June 15/00 or Apr. 1/99 - Mar. 30/00)

Program name: ________________________________

7. What services were delivered during this program cycle?

Information needed	**Description (use only numbers)**	**Source of information**	**Method**
number of inquiries from potential students		student records *	document review
number of adult students who received tutoring		student records *	document review
gender **		student records *	document review
number of male students			
number of female students			
previous schooling in Canada (# of students) **		student records *	document review
no schooling			
Grade 1 - 3			
Grade 4 - 6			
Grade 7 - 9			
Grade 10+			
special education			
previous schooling outside Canada **		student records *	document review
no schooling			
1 - 3 years			
4 - 6 years			
7 - 9 years			
10+ years			

* all information regarding services delivered can be documented in Lit-Link and automatically calculated for year-end participation summaries

** total must be the same as the total number of adult students who received tutoring

Information needed	Description (use only numbers)	Source of information	Method
students' ages **		student records *	document review
19 years or younger			
20 - 35 years			
36 - 55 years			
56+ years			
unknown			
students' primary reason for joining program **		student records *	document review
education			
employment			
personal			
students' occupation **		student records *	document review
employed			
unemployed			
self-employed			
homemaker			
student			
inmate			
retired			
other			
number of students with special characteristics		student records *	document review
physical handicap(s)			
mental handicap			
diagnosed learning disability			
number of students with English as a Second Language		student records *	document review
fluent (working on reading & writing)			
not fluent (working on listening and speaking)			

** total must be the same as the total number of adult students who received tutoring

Information needed	Description (use only numbers)	Source of information	Method
reasons for students leaving program		student records *	document review
obtained or changed job			
enrolled in educational program			
moved			
time or family commitments			
program not appropriate			
lack of motivation			
asked to leave			
completed			
other			
number of students referred to another educational program		student records *	document review
after tutoring			
without tutoring			
total hours of student participation		tutor logs, student records *	document review
being tutored			
homework (if available)			
other (if available)			
student satisfaction:	*(give average response, e.g. 3.5 out of 5)*	students	interview, survey, focus group
The program teaches students what they need to learn.			
Students can use what they learned in their daily life.			
The quality of the services provided was good.			
The program will help students to achieve their goals.			
Overall, students are satisfied with this program.			

Information needed	**Description (use only numbers)**	**Source of information**	**Method**
number of inquiries from potential tutors		program records *	document review
number of trained tutors (A)		workshop records *	document review
number of tutors who tutored (matched)		tutor records *	document review
gender (matched tutors) ***		tutor records *	document review
number of male tutors			
number of female tutors			
education (matched tutors)***		tutor records *	document review
Grade 9 or less			
Grade 10 - 12			
teacher training			
college or university (other than teacher training)			
occupation (matched tutors)***		tutor records *	document review
employed			
unemployed			
self-employed			
homemaker			
student			
retired			
other			
total hours of tutor participation (B)		workshop records, tutor logs *	document review
training			
tutoring			
prep. time if available			

*** total must be the same as the total number of matched tutors

Information needed	Description (use only numbers)	Source of information	Method
number of board/council/committee members (C)		minutes, reports *	document review
total hours of participation by board/council/committee members (D)		minutes, activity records *	document review
number of volunteers other than tutors and board/council/committee members (E)		activity records *	document review
total hours of participation by other volunteers (include training) (F)		program records *	document review
total number of volunteers (A+C+E)		(calculate) *	
total number of volunteer hours (B+D+F)		(calculate) *	
Student-Tutor Participation Summary			
number of adult students who were tutored (p. 92) (G)			
number of tutors who tutored (p. 95) (H)			
Total number of students and tutors (G+H)			
number of hours students were tutored (p. 94) (I)			
number of hours tutors tutored (p. 95) (J)			
Total number of tutoring hours (I+J)			

(End of Participation Summary information. See page 13 for instructions.)

7. What services were delivered during this program cycle? (cont.)

describe other services and activities (e.g. family literacy projects, students studying independently, answering requests for information, research projects, community presentations)

8. What were the costs of delivering the program?

Information needed	Description	Source of information	Method
actual budget expenditures		budget	document review
dollar value of volunteer contribution (tutor hours x $15 + other volunteer hours x $10 = total)		(calculate)	
estimated dollar value of other contributions (e.g. facilities $300 x 12 months = $3600) (Check #3 on page 18)		(calculate)	
other/comments (e.g. note whether project funding also supports volunteer tutor program)			
Total cost of program delivery		(calculate)	

9. *What is the impact of the program on its participants?*

(Note: information on student satisfaction is required by Community Programs, and therefore appears as part of #7 on previous pages.)

Information needed	**Description**	**Source of information**	**Method**
benefits to or changes observed in participants' knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, behavior, or status during the program	*(give summary of benefits, changes)*	assessment records (e.g. Progress Profile), case studies, Lit-Link	document review
tutors' overall satisfaction with the program	*(give average response, e.g. 3.5 out of 5)*	tutors	interview, survey
other			

Example of how to use the Program Operations tables

Standards	Choose at least one indicator unless otherwise noted	Possible sources of information	Recommended methods	Date
4.2 The program has clearly written and realistic job descriptions for its tutors. ✓	• existence of job descriptions ✓ **PLUS** • tutor feedback ✓	• job descriptions • tutors	• document review •interview, survey, focus group	*Nov. '98*
4.3 An interview is used primarily to discuss the tutor's expectations and to explain the program's requirements.	• content of interview	• outline of interview, notes taken during interview	• document review	
4.4 The program provides initial tutor training in at least the following areas: • introduction to literacy • student-centred approaches, methods and strategies in reading, writing, and/or math • available resources and support • tutor roles and responsibilities. ✓	• content of training workshops ✓ • tutor satisfaction with content of initial training	• outline of initial training workshops • tutors	• document review • interview, survey, focus group	*Nov. '98*
other *Tutors are given a Tutor Manual that outlines basic program and tutoring information.*	*• content of tutor orientation*	*• outline of orientation*	*• document review*	

If one of the evaluation questions that a program chooses is "In what ways are we providing quality tutoring?", the standards above might be seen as providing useful information. For each standard selected, indicators, sources of information, and methods are chosen based on the resources available. In this example, the program will review two documents and have one question for a tutor survey.

Appendix B — Sample items for surveys, interviews, and focus groups

Purpose of Appendix B

The items or questions in this appendix are intended to be used as part of Step 3, when you develop the survey, interview, and/or focus group forms that you will use to collect information from your participants. The first part of the appendix lists sample instructions that you can use and adapt for your tools, and then items are listed for tutors, students, board/council/committee members, volunteer staff, and paid staff.

Remember to select the items that match the standards, indicators, sources of information, and methods that you chose in Step 3. There are also items listed for the Program Results questions in Step 3. **These lists are not intended to be used in their entirety as questionnaires!**

Finally, in the case of using these items for interviews or focus groups, research has shown the importance of asking questions exactly as worded on the questionnaire. Inadvertent or even very slight word changes can change the response obtained. If questions are rephrased or response categories changed by the interviewer, the responses can't accurately be combined with the responses obtained by interviewers who used the exact wording. If a person doesn't understand the question, repeat it for them, and if they still don't understand it, go on to the next question.

Why it's useful

When this process was piloted, coordinators found this appendix useful because:

- it is especially useful for programs with little or no experience in program evaluation;
- a tremendous amount of time is saved by not having to create and edit each question; and
- it helped the coordinator to think about all of the interest groups affected by her program.

Tip from a pilot site: depending on which items are used in a survey, interview, etc., it might be useful to pull definitions from the glossary and include them with the instructions. One person may have a different understanding of "mission," "philosophy," etc. than another person.

Instructions: For each survey, interview, or focus group form that you are developing, include a set of instructions and the items that correspond to your selections in Step 3. See page 48 for an example of a survey.

(Survey Instructions)

Instructions: Please take a few moments to complete this survey, and return it to the program no later than (insert date). (Use the stamped envelope provided, or drop it off at the program office.) You do not need to put your name on the survey.

Listed below are (insert number) questions that will help us to evaluate our program and its services. Circle the most appropriate answer, and include an explanation wherever possible. Thank you!

(Focus Group Instructions)

Thank you all for coming to this meeting. Your participation will help us to understand what our program's strengths are, where we need to improve, and what changes we need to make, if any.

We have a set of (insert number) questions to guide our discussion. Your answers will be confidential, and your names won't appear anywhere in the evaluation findings.

I'm going to be asking two kinds of questions. Some of the questions ask you to answer "yes" or "no," or they ask you to rate how satisfied you are with a part of the program. I'll also ask you to explain your answers. For the other kind of question, you'll just be asked for your thoughts and opinions. If you don't understand a question, please ask me to repeat it.

(Interview Instructions)

I would like to ask you some questions about how well our literacy program is working. The questions cover several different areas, some of which you may know quite a bit about, and others you may not know much about.

This isn't a test of how much you know about the program, or of how well you're doing in the program. It's a way to get information and ideas that we can use to see how the program's doing, and to make changes if necessary.

Your point of view is important. Please answer these questions as honestly as you can. All of your answers are confidential, and your name won't be used anywhere in the evaluation, except to keep track of who we've talked to so far.

There are two kinds of questions in this interview. Some of the questions ask you to answer "yes" or "no," or they ask you to rate how satisfied you are with a part of the program. You can explain your answer to any of these questions. For the other kind of question, you'll just be asked for your thoughts and opinions.

There are (insert number) questions in total. If you don't understand a question, please ask me to repeat it.

Sample items for use with tutors

In what ways does our program have a relevant and applied philosophy?

1. Do you think the way the program operates is consistent with its philosophy and vision? (2.1)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ______________________________

____

____

2. Were the program's philosophy and vision communicated to you in ways that were easy to understand? (2.3)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ______________________________

____

____

3. How satisfied are you with your opportunity to give input in developing the program's mission, vision, and values statements? (2.6)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Doesn't apply
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ______________________________

____

____

4. How satisfied are you with your opportunity to give input when the program reviewed its mission, vision, and values statements? (2.7)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

In what ways do we deliver programming that addresses the needs of the individual?

5. Did you get useful lesson-planning information from your student's initial assessment? (3.3)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ____

____

____

6. In what ways does your student participate in defining and revisiting his or her own goals? (3.6)

Please describe ____

____

____

7. In what ways does your student participate in his/her assessments? These include assessments during the program and, if possible, when the student leaves the program. (3.8)

Please describe ____

____

____

8. When your student is assessed during the program, do you find the resulting information relevant in reviewing his or her progress? (3.8)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ____

____

____

9. When your student is assessed during the program, do you use the resulting information in developing lesson plans? (3.8)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ____

____

____

10. How often do you give your student praise and positive reinforcement? (3.18)

Never				Very often	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

In what ways are we providing quality tutoring?

11. In your opinion, is the tutor job description clearly written? (4.2)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ____

____

____

12. In your opinion, is the tutor job description realistic? (4.2)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ____

____

____

13. The program should provide initial training for tutors in at least the following areas: introduction to literacy; student-centered approaches, methods and strategies in reading, writing and/or math; available resources and support; and tutor roles and responsibilities. How satisfied are you that the training you received addressed these topics? (4.4)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

14. How satisfied are you with other training provided by the program? (4.5)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

15. How available are the program staff when you have questions or concerns? (4.8)

Not at all available				Very available	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

16. How satisfied are you with the help the program staff gives you in using the program's books and other resource materials? (4.10)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

17. How satisfied are you with the help the program staff gives you in improving your effectiveness as a tutor? (4.11)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

18. How satisfied are you with your opportunity to network with other tutors? (4.12)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

19. Do you feel valued and appreciated as a tutor? (4.13)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ____

____

____

20. How satisfied are you with the program's recognition events for tutors? (4.14)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

In what ways do we have sound program administration?

21. Were the program's expectations regarding confidentiality clearly communicated to you? (5.21)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ____

____

____

22. How satisfied are you with the number of books and other resource materials for students and tutors? (5.34)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

23. Do you find that books and other resource materials are available when you need them? (5.34)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ____

____

____

24. How satisfied are you that the books and other resource materials are relevant to you and your student? (5.35)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

25. The program's facilities should be safe and inviting for all participants. How satisfied are you with the program's facilities in this regard? (5.37)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

In what ways is our program effectively planned and evaluated?

26. How satisfied are you with your opportunity to take part when the program sets its goals and objectives? (6.9)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

27. How satisfied are you with your opportunity to take part in evaluating the program's effectiveness? (6.10)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

28. Have you been encouraged to give feedback on the program? (6.11)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ____

____

____

Program Results

29. How satisfied are you with the program overall? (#9)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

Sample items for use with students

Philosophy

1. The people in this program have developed guidelines and beliefs about how it should operate. (This is called the program philosophy.) Do you think the way it actually operates matches that philosophy? (2.1)

   Yes No Don't know

   Please explain ____________________

   ____

   ____

2. The people involved in this program have developed guidelines and beliefs about how it should operate. (This is called the program philosophy.) Did someone explain this philosophy to you in a way that was easy to understand? (2.3)

   Yes No Don't know

   Please explain ____________________

   ____

   ____

3. The people in this program have described how the program would look if it were the best it could be. They make their plans for the future of the program based on this picture. (This is called the program vision.) Did someone explain the vision to you in a way that was easy to understand? (2.3)

   Yes No Don't know

   Please explain ____________________

   ____

   ____

4. The people in this program decide on what values are important for this organization, what its purpose is (its mission) and what its future should be (its vision). How satisfied are you with the chance you had to take part in those decisions? (2.6)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Doesn't apply
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ______________________________

____

____

5. The people in this program decide on what values are important for this organization, what its purpose is (its mission) and what its future should be (its vision). Every three years they review these things and see if they need to be changed. How satisfied are you with your chance to take part in that review? (2.7)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ______________________________

____

____

Programming

6. When you first joined the program, did you get useful information from your initial assessment? (3.3) (Note: you may wish to use "interview with the coordinator" rather than "initial assessment.")

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ______________________________

____

____

7. As a student, you are supposed to have the chance to take part in setting your own learning goals. In what ways do you take part in setting your own goals? (3.6)

Please describe ____

____

____

8. Your lesson plans and ways of measuring progress should be based on what you want to learn. How satisfied are you that this is what happens? (3.7)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

9. When your progress is measured, do you and your tutor use the information to figure out how much progress you have made toward your goals? (3.8)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ____

____

____

10. How satisfied are you that the lessons you have with your tutor fit your goals, skills, and interests? (3.11)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

11. You should be able to talk to program staff to ask them questions or talk about any concerns. How satisfied are you that staff are available to you in this way? (3.14)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

12. How satisfied are you with the support services the program offers you as a student? (Note: We suggest you name some examples of what your program offers students so that this is not so abstract.) (3.16)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

13. The program should have information about different kinds of support services you could use outside the program. How satisfied are you with the help in finding support services outside the program? (3.16)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Doesn't apply
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

14. When you want to find out about other education and training programs, someone in the literacy program should help you do that. How satisfied are you with this help? (3.17)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Doesn't apply
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____________________

____

____

15. Do you feel encouraged and supported by your tutor? (3.18)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ____________________

____

____

16. Do you feel encouraged and supported by program staff? (3.18)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ____________________

____

____

17. Do you like the way the program recognizes the work you do and the progress you make? (3.19)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ____________________

____

____

Administration

18. Is it clear to you what the program expects about keeping information private and confidential? (5.21)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain

19. How satisfied are you that there are enough books and other resource materials for you to use at the literacy program? (5.34)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain

20. How satisfied are you that the program's books and other resource materials are there when you want them? (5.34)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain

21. The books and other resource materials should be interesting and related to what you want to learn. How satisfied are you that they are? (5.35)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

22. The program's facilities should make people feel welcome and safe. How satisfied are you that the program's facilities make these things possible? (5.37)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

Planning and evaluation

23. The people involved in this program decide what the program's goals are. How satisfied are you with the chance you had to take part in making those decisions? (6.9)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

24. How satisfied are you with the opportunity you had to help evaluate the program? (6.10)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ______________________________

____

____

25. Have you been encouraged to give feedback on the program? (6.11)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ______________________________

____

____

Program Results

26. How satisfied are you that the literacy program taught you what you needed to learn? (#7)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ______________________________

____

____

27. How satisfied are you that you can use what you learned in your daily life? (#7)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ______________________________

____

____

28. How satisfied are you that the quality of the services provided was good? (#7)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

29. How satisfied are you that the literacy program will help you to achieve your goals? (#7)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

30. Overall, how satisfied are you with the literacy program? (#7)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

Sample items for use with board/council/committee members

In what ways is our program community-based?

1. Were your responsibilities as a board/council/committee member clearly documented and communicated to you? (1.4)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ______________________________

____

____

2. How satisfied are you that the board/council/committee's annual goals and action plans support the goals of the literacy program? (1.6)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ______________________________

____

____

3. How satisfied are you with the support the board/council/committee receives to help it accomplish its literacy-related goals? (1.7)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ______________________________

____

____

In what ways does our program have a relevant and applied philosophy?

4. Do you think the program's goals match its philosophy and vision? (2.1)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ______________________________

5. Do you think the program's services and operations match its philosophy and vision? (2.1)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ______________________________

6. Were the program's philosophy and vision communicated to you in ways that were easy to understand? (2.3)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ______________________________

7. How satisfied are you that the program's philosophy-related statements reflect the literacy needs of the community? (2.4)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ______________________________

8. How satisfied were you with your opportunity to give input in developing the program's mission, vision, and values statements? (2.6)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Doesn't apply
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

9. How satisfied were you with your opportunity to give input when the program reviewed its mission, vision, and values statements? (2.7)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

In what ways do we have sound program administration?

10. The program's fiscal management should include, at a minimum: an annual budget approved by the board/council/ committee; regular reports presented to the board/council/committee; and an annual review or audit. How satisfied are you that the program's fiscal management includes these things? (5.5)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

11. Were the program's expectations regarding confidentiality clearly communicated to you? (5.21)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ______________________________

____

____

12. How satisfied are you that staff time is organized so that both the participants' needs and the program's administrative demands are met? (5.23)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ______________________________

____

____

13. Do you feel valued and appreciated as a volunteer? (5.25)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ______________________________

____

____

14. How satisfied are you with the program's recognition events for volunteers? (5.26)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ______________________________

____

____

15. How satisfied are you that books and other resource materials are available to all participants? (5.34)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

16. The program's facilities should be safe and inviting for all participants and should have enough room for administrative tasks and for working with participants. How satisfied are you with the program's facilities in this regard? (5.37)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

In what ways is our program effectively planned and evaluated?

17. In your opinion, are the evaluation tools used by the program compatible with its philosophy, goals and delivery methods? (6.5)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ____

____

____

18. How satisfied are you with your opportunity to give input when the program sets its goals and objectives? (6.9)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

19. How satisfied are you with your opportunity to take part in evaluating the program's effectiveness? (6.10)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

20. Have you been encouraged to give feedback on the program? (6.11)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ____

____

____

Sample items for use with volunteer staff

In what ways does our program have a relevant and applied philosophy?

1. Do you think the program's services and operations match its philosophy and vision? (2.1)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ____

____

____

2. Were the program's philosophy and vision communicated to you in ways that were easy to understand? (2.3)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ____

____

____

3. How satisfied were you with your opportunity to give input in developing the program's mission, vision, and values statements? (2.6)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Doesn't apply
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

4. How satisfied were you with your opportunity to give input when the program reviewed its mission, vision, and values statements? (2.7)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

In what ways do we deliver programming that addresses the needs of the individual?

5. How knowledgeable are you about other education and training programs in the community?(3.17)

Not at all knowledgeable				Very knowledgeable	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

6. Do you help students use the information available on other education and training programs? (3.17)

Yes	No	Don't know

Please explain ____

____

____

7. How often do you give students praise and positive reinforcement? (3.18)

Never				Very often	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

In what ways do we have sound program administration?

8. In your opinion, is your job description clearly written? (5.10)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ______________________________

____

____

9. In your opinion, is your job description realistic? (5.10)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ______________________________

____

____

10. Volunteer staff should have access to initial and ongoing training in areas relevant to their duties. How satisfied are you that the program has provided you with this training? (5.14)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ______________________________

____

____

11. How satisfied are you that the program's expectations of you are clearly defined and communicated? (5.17)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ______________________________

____

____

12. How satisfied are you that you have the resources you need to do your work? (5.18)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

13. Were the program's expectations regarding confidentiality clearly communicated to you? (5.21)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ____

____

____

14. How satisfied are you that the staff's time is organized so that both the participants' needs and the program's administrative demands are met? (5.23)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

15. Do you feel valued and appreciated as a volunteer? (5.25)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ____

____

____

16. How satisfied are you with the program's recognition events for volunteers? (5.26)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

17. How satisfied are you that books and other resource materials are available to all participants? (5.34)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

18. The program's facilities should be safe and inviting for all participants and should have enough room for administrative tasks and for working with participants. How satisfied are you with the program's facilities in this regard? (5.37)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

In what ways is our program effectively planned and evaluated?

19. How satisfied are you with your opportunity to give input when the program sets its goals and objectives? (6.9)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

20. How satisfied are you with your opportunity to take part in evaluating the program's effectiveness? (6.10)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

21. Have you been encouraged to give feedback on the program? (6.11)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ____

____

____

Sample items for use with paid staff

In what ways is our program community based?

1. How satisfied are you that the board/council/committee's annuals goals and action plans support the goals of the literacy program? (1.6)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ______________________________

____

____

In what ways does our program have a relevant and applied philosophy?

2. Do you think the program's services and operations match its philosophy and vision? (2.1)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ______________________________

____

____

3. Were the program's philosophy and vision communicated to you in ways that were easy to understand? (2.3)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ______________________________

____

____

4. How satisfied were you with your opportunity to give input in developing the program's mission, vision, and values statements? (2.6)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Doesn't apply
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

5. How satisfied were you with your opportunity to give input when the program reviewed its mission, vision, and values statements? (2.7)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

In what ways do we deliver programming that addresses the needs of the individual?

6. Are you satisfied that the information gathered during the students' initial interviews is handled confidentially? (3.1)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ____

____

____

7. In what way do students participate in their initial assessments? (3.3)

Please describe ____

____

____

8. In what ways do students participate in defining and revisiting their own goals? (3.6)

Please describe ____

9. In what ways do students participate in their ongoing and exit assessments? (3.8)

Please describe ____

10. How knowledgeable are you about other education and training programs in the community? (3.17)

Not at all knowledgeable				Very knowledgeable	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

11. Do you help students use the information available on other education and training programs? (3.17)

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

Please explain ____

12. How often do you give students praise and positive reinforcement? (3.18)

Never				Very often	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

In what ways are we providing quality tutoring?

13. How satisfied are you with the opportunities you have to help tutors improve their effectiveness? (4.11)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

14. How satisfied are you with your ability to help tutors improve their effectiveness? (4.11)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

In what ways do we have sound program administration?

15. How satisfied are you that your job description is comprehensive? (5.8)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

16. How satisfied are you that your job description is clearly written? (5.8)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

17. How satisfied are you that your job description is realistic? (5.8)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

18. Depending on their roles in the program, staff should have access to training in the following areas: teaching reading, writing and math; volunteer management; assessment techniques and tools; program and office management; building community partnerships; and current literacy research and trends. How satisfied are you with your access to training in these areas? (5.13)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

19. The program should provide staff with networking opportunities at least twice a year through its links with other literacy organizations. How satisfied are you with the opportunity to network with others working in literacy? (5.16)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

20. Were the program's expectations regarding confidentiality clearly communicated to you? (5.21)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ____

____

____

21. How well do you think the program's recruitment plans take into consideration the space and resources available? (5.22)

Not at all well				Very well	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

22. How satisfied are you that the staff's time is organized so that both the participants' needs and the program's administrative demands are met? (5.23)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

23. How satisfied are you that participant records are relevant and up-to-date? (5.28)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

24. How satisfied are you that books and other resources are available when participants need them? (5.34)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

25. The program's facilities should be safe and inviting for all participants and should have enough room for administrative tasks and for working with participants. How satisfied are you with the program's facilities in this regard? (5.37)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

26. How satisfied are you that the program provides you with the office and instructional equipment you need to carry out your responsibilities? (5.38)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ____

____

____

In what ways is our program effectively planned and evaluated?

27. Do you keep informed of relevant development in literacy practice (e.g. STAPLE, Lit-Link, etc.)?

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ______________________________

____

____

28. Do you incorporate relevant developments in literacy practice into program planning? (6.3)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ______________________________

____

____

29. In your opinion, are the evaluation tools used by the program compatible with its philosophy, goals and delivery methods? (6.5)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain ______________________________

____

____

30. How satisfied are you with your opportunity to give input when the program sets its goals and objectives? (6.9)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ______________________________

____

____

31. How satisfied are you with your opportunity to take part in evaluating the program's effectiveness? (6.10)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain

32. Have you been encouraged to give feedback on the program? (6.11)

Yes No Don't know

Please explain

Sample items for community agencies

In what ways is our program community based?

1. How satisfied are you that the services offered by the literacy program are appropriate for the needs of the community? (1.2)

Not at all satisfied				Very satisfied	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	

Please explain ______________________________

____

____

Other items suggested as useful by pilot site programs:

1. Do you know about the literacy program?

Yes No Don't know

2. Do you have information about the program?

Yes No Don't know

3. Do you refer people to the program?

Yes No Don't know

If yes, what do you refer them for? (e.g. tutoring, information about literacy, to tutor, etc.)

____

____

If no, why not?

____

____

4. Have you been contacted by program staff in the last year?

Yes No Don't know

If yes, what for? How did you respond?

____

____

Appendix C Case study

Purpose of the case study

This case study is based on the combined experiences of the seven literacy programs that piloted Setting the Compass. It is intended as an example of a volunteer literacy program using the process outlined in the document. You may find it useful to refer to as you work through the document.

Description of the program

The ABC Literacy Program has been in operation nine years and Jane Doe has been the coordinator for almost four years. The program is located in Anywhere, a town of eight thousand surrounded by farm and ranch land. Although most people are involved in small businesses or prairie agriculture, other major employers are an oilfield supply company, a hospital and an extended care facility.

Most of the program's participants live in town, but some students and tutors come from the surrounding area, including from two nearby smaller villages, Smalltown and Smallertown. All in all, the program serves a population of just over 16,500 people, according to the latest census. The program is open from September through the middle of June and takes new students and volunteers on an ongoing basis.

ABC has twenty-three pairs, eight of them new matches this year. Most pairs work on basic literacy and numeracy at a variety of different levels, and six focus on ESL. Some tutors work one-on-one with more than one student. Since the oilfield supply company opened, the program has been getting quite a few students who work there, but Jane finds that they are often sent out of town on short notice. The program began ESL classes last year, but found the scheduling difficult because so many of the students own businesses and cannot get to class at a set time. ABC also offers classes through the Adult Learning Council which focus on a variety of topics, such as spelling or doing a job search.

Last year, the program planned a Books for Babies project which will get off the ground this year with money from Anywhere Family and Community Support Services and the Somewhere Regional Health Authority's new funding initiative. Also this year, the program intends to begin offering regular in-service workshops to its volunteer tutors, with plans for five of them already made.

Jane Doe, as coordinator, is the only paid staff member of the program. She works part-time, sixteen hours a week, and frequently puts in volunteer hours herself. Her job is made easier because she has a very supportive group of tutors. Many find the time to do extra volunteer work for the program, flipping burgers at a fundraiser or shelving library books, for example. Though Jane has tried to encourage the students to get involved in the program beyond their tutoring sessions, she has not had much success in finding a fit for them.

The program has an active advisory committee. They meet four to six times a year, depending on the program's activities, and are especially useful in helping to promote the program. The Community Adult Learning Council is the program's hosting authority.

Step 1

Following the guidelines as laid out in *Setting the Compass*, Jane began by reviewing the whole document. The most difficult part of this task and, as it turned out, for other parts of the process as well, was finding uninterrupted time. She ended up taking the document home to read it one afternoon. When she got back to the office, she had a volunteer go through the document and photocopy the worksheets, to make sure there were originals left to use in future years.

Reviewing the document gave her a sense of what was to come and was useful when she approached people to be on an evaluation team because she could answer their questions. She and John Smith, the chairperson of the program's advisory committee, brainstormed possible evaluation team members. They began by listing the stakeholders whom they wanted to see represented. They listed more names than they would need in case the first few contacted were unable to participate.

Jane then used the sample letter as a guide and wrote to the first four potential members on the list. She knew the people fairly well and could have just called them, but she felt it was easier to write a letter than to explain to each one individually why she was contacting them. She followed up on the letter with a phone call several days later. Two of the four had too many commitments already and so she went back to the list for another two names. Jane and John really wanted to see a student on the team and, in the end, a student-tutor pair agreed to join.

Before the first evaluation team meeting in late September, Jane completed the portion of the document which describes the program and its context. Most of the information was readily available and the process took about an hour and a half. She started a separate file of copies of the pages which she'd send to Community Programs when they called for them.

The members of the evaluation team met for the first time the next week. After the basic introductions, Jane gave them a quick overview of the document and the various purposes of each step. This process allowed the team to be sure everyone understood the tasks ahead.

The members of the evaluation team agreed that, before their next meeting, they would like to see the results of the checklist which determined how ready the program was for an evaluation. They felt that it was up to the program's advisory committee to deal with any barriers to evaluation so that they could proceed with their tasks. Jane sent the form to the tutors, with a cover letter explaining that the program wanted to undertake an evaluation in the near future and would use their responses to determine how ready the program was for it. She also sent the form to advisory committee members and gave it to her two office volunteers when they came in. Once compiled, the results showed that several points on the checklist needed to be addressed. However, the advisory committee decided that each of these could be dealt with through communication and future planning and decided to go ahead with the evaluation.

Step 2

When the evaluation team members arrived for their next meeting, Jane handed out copies of the checklist "Clarify why you're doing evaluation, and for whom." There was quite a bit of discussion about who would be interested in the results of their evaluation and why. The difficulty was not in "choosing who" so much as in prioritizing them for this year's evaluation, because it was soon obvious that they couldn't do everything for everybody. They decided that for their first systematic evaluation, they wanted information that would be useful to students and tutors, and for basic accountability to the funder. By the time the group was finished with this exercise, the evaluation already seemed more focused.

The group then went on to look at the suggested evaluation questions. The synopsis accompanying each question helped them to understand what parts of the program the questions were related to. They found that in some cases one question answered the needs of more than one audience. For example, determining the impact of the program on its participants would be a question funders would want answered, but it was also something the program coordinator and advisory committee always wanted to know and would be of great interest to tutors and students.

It was obvious that for the audiences they had identified, they would want to focus on questions 3, 4, 5, and 7 for this evaluation. Following the instructions for this section, they then looked in Appendix A at the standards and Program Results items associated with each of these questions. It would have been easy to choose the standards that they knew were already being achieved, but instead they chose standards that would be the most useful and appropriate for their program. Some were in fact ones the program already met. For others, they needed to collect information to find out how their program was doing. When they finished this exercise, the group had identified eighteen standards and question #7 as items that they were interested in working with. (Jane had already explained to the group that, together with the two pages in Step 1, question #7 was to be submitted to Community Programs in place of the Participation Summary previously sent out by the funder.)

The group found that working through Appendix A and making decisions about how they would collect information related to these items was time consuming but worthwhile. They found they had to think ahead about what would work best for their program, especially for their students and tutors. They decided they would hold a focus group with students and use a mail-out survey with tutors. Jane would also have to review program records for some of the standards.

Once the evaluation team began identifying the resources needed for the standards they had selected, they realized it wasn't possible to deal with as many standards as they had chosen. They had to go back to the list and set priorities. They decided to work with a total of ten standards for this first evaluation. That number seemed reasonable in that the amount of work involved was feasible and would provide enough information to make the evaluation worthwhile.

Earlier in the process, when looking at how ready ABC was for evaluation in Step1, everyone had agreed that they needed to decide how much to include in the budget for evaluation. Now that they were looking at the resources they needed, the evaluation team came up with a list of questions for Jane to consider. When did she have time to do evaluation-related work? If she really didn't have any time, how could she make time? How much would it cost to make time, e.g. could she give up some other program activities? Could her paid hours be increased? Could the program pay someone else to do some of her current work? Thinking about these questions helped the program to estimate the cost of the evaluation in financial terms.

In the end, the evaluation team decided that the following would be the focus of their evaluation:

- they would find out about overall student satisfaction by holding a focus group (part of #7 in Appendix A);
- they would find out about programming that addresses the needs of the individual by reviewing documents, holding the student focus group, and surveying tutors (standards 3.3, 3.6, 3.8 and 3.12 in Appendix A);
- they would find out in what ways the program provides quality tutoring by reviewing documents and surveying tutors (standards 4.2, 4.4, 4.6 and 4.11); and
- they would find out in what ways they have sound program administration by reviewing documents and polling advisory committee members at their next meeting (standards 5.1 and 5.5).
- Jane would also need to review student records and some other files to complete question #7 for Community Programs.

They felt this information would be a good start to reviewing the program as a whole, dealing as it did with aspects of the program which seemed crucial to them. The team agreed the eight standards that they had taken off the list should be kept on file for the next evaluation cycle.

Because the members of the evaluation team had been involved from the start in making decisions about the planning and evaluation process, they were very willing to take on responsibilities when it came to filling out the workplan in Step 2. They would need to find some additional volunteers to work with them, and two of the team members agreed to make sure that it was not left on Jane's shoulders. The group ended Step 2 with a clear sense of purpose and a realistic picture of what they needed to do.

By mid-November, the evaluation team informed the rest of the program participants about the evaluation they had planned. Jane wrote an article for the program newsletter and asked the tutors to inform their students about the evaluation, its purpose, and how people would be involved. Because systematic evaluation had never been part of ABC before, some people assumed that "something was wrong" for it to be happening now. This highlighted for Jane and the others involved that planning and evaluation needed to be presented as a regular part of program practice in order for people to feel comfortable giving feedback on the program.

Step 3

For Step 3, Jane reviewed the methods of evaluation which the program had used in the past, which consisted primarily of the evaluations handed out at the end of tutor training sessions and compiling statistics for the government. She also worked with another evaluation team member to review documents. This activity highlighted the program's need to have information recorded rather than just relying on people's memories. They realized that while a lot of the necessary documentation can be quite informal (just a quick note to describe a conversation with a potential community partner, for example), it does need to be systematic.

The evaluation team found it very straight-forward to develop the tutor survey and the student focus group questions using the items in Appendix B, and tested the tutor surveys by using process recommended in Step 3. The town librarian, a friend to the literacy program but not directly connected to it, had agreed to facilitate the student focus group. Jane called several students and, having explained the purpose of the evaluation, checked to see if they would be willing to test the questions that were going to be asked in the focus group. The librarian then called the three students who had agreed. She found that the students asked questions about both the questions and the process, which helped her prepare for the focus group.

Because they were only looking at one standard that required getting input from the advisory committee, there was no reason to develop a survey or interview form. Jane asked to have the question relating to standard 5.5 (fiscal management) put on the agenda for the next advisory committee meeting.

The team decided that for this first evaluation, it would be worth the time to have Jane contact students to invite them to the focus group and to explain why questions were being asked of them. Jane reminded the students that their perspective is unique and valuable. During that call and during the actual focus group, Jane and the librarian explained that the evaluation was not to judge the tutors' or coordinator's performance, but rather to see how the program was doing as a whole, e.g. whether it was providing adequate tutor training and whether the student assessments were useful.

The evaluation team used the focus group to get information on the students' overall satisfaction with the program, part of question #7 in Program Results. The rest of #7, though, required statistical data which was easiest for Jane to access. She filed the pull-out sheets from question #7 with the earlier "Participation Summary" pages from Step 1, ready to fill out when she received notice from Community Programs at Advanced Education and Career Development.

As feedback from participants began coming in through March and April, Jane kept track of it by simply having three different files, one for students, one for tutors, and one for advisory committee members. She developed a log in which she recorded how many surveys had been mailed out and how many returned.

Step 3 was the most time-consuming so far, but well worth the effort. The evaluation team was pleased that, having planned early, they had the time to prepare and test the tools without feeling too rushed and that they had six weeks or more to bring in all the results. The turn-out for the focus group had been quite small, but they recognized that it was the first time and that it would get easier each time as it became part of the program.

Step 4

By now the evaluation team had been working together for several months, and had met four times. They found they needed to readjust the timelines a few times and had to resolve some disagreements about how best to proceed, but on the whole they had accomplished much and learned a lot. They had made a habit of meeting in Jane's office over lunch, and had enjoyed many laughs. And, in just over four weeks, by the end of May, they planned to have completed the first evaluation of ABC.

Jane compiled the information from the focus group and surveys. It took time, but she found it interesting and informative. She liked the fact that the questions presented in Appendix B presented a balance of easily-tallied numerical information and longer descriptive comments. She made note of several good quotes to use when telling others about the program and the evaluation.

Jane found that calculating the average of each rating scale went very quickly, but summarizing the descriptive comments took longer because it was an unfamiliar task. She went through all the feedback once and highlighted key ideas, and found this helped to come up with a code.

Once Jane finished compiling the collected information, the evaluation team met again. Together, they worked to outline the factors which contributed to or impeded the program's success. As with any town, lots happened that year in Anywhere. At first the team was tempted to see everything as a contributing or impeding factor. After discussion, though, the team members settled on two factors which had significantly affected their program that year: the new funding available through the regional health authority and the short time many students spent in the program because of local employment.

The evaluation team found the next part of the process easy to do. They used the chart provided to note all the information that had been summarized for each standard from document reviews, the focus group, interviews and surveys. From there, they decided which standards they had achieved and which needed work. On the whole, the experience was positive and reassuring. It showed them clearly what needed to be done and, just as importantly, showed many of the ways the program was already doing well. Much of the information validated what the team thought about the program already. They were pleased to have their hunches confirmed.

As they began to answer the evaluation questions, the team talked about how long ago November now seemed. It was useful and interesting to apply the standards and the collected information to the questions selected six months before, bringing the process full circle. Answering the questions this specifically gave the team, especially Jane, very clear thoughts and ideas which could be used in presentations to stakeholder, including the next tutor training and her speech planned for the Rotary Club.

They were glad, at this point, to have had the discussions about the additional factors which contributed to and impeded their success. They realized, because of that conversation, why on-going assessment was a weaker area in programming than, say, initial assessment: many students did not stay in the program very long and left without notice. The program did need to look at on-going assessment, but looking at the contributing factor helped them put this particular program evaluation result in perspective.

On the whole, the team concluded that the program was meeting its goals. The students were satisfied overall. The areas where practice could be improved were clearly outlined. The very fact that the program was able and willing to respond to these was seen as a strength. They decided to write an article for the ABC Newsletter outlining the evaluation results and the conclusions they had drawn. Their conclusions would also be the basis of the upcoming planning day.

As a result of the evaluation, the whole team and Jane especially felt focused, with clear and achievable goals in mind. The information they collected would be useful not only in moving their program forward and in reporting to Community Programs, but in reminding them to celebrate their successes.

Appendix D Background on ALPS

Overview

The Alberta Literacy Project Standards (ALPS) Project was:

- a two-phased project funded by the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS) of Human Resources Development Canada;
- sponsored by the Association of Literacy Coordinators of Alberta (LCA) and managed by the Association's Board of Directors;
- jointly coordinated by Sharon Skage of Edmonton and Marnie Schaetti of Calgary.

Project Stakeholders

While the standard membership of the LCA has had final say in the approving the results of the project, the following are all considered to be stakeholders in ALPS, as they are in Alberta's literacy programs more generally:

- literacy coordinators
- the LCA Board of Directors
- tutors
- students
- funders
- communities at large

Goals

In the first phase of ALPS:

- in cooperation with stakeholders and the ALPS Advisory Committee, to develop good practice statements to serve as guidelines for effective community-based volunteer literacy programs in Alberta;
- to ensure that the statements mesh with the Department of Advanced Education and Career Development's accountability initiative, holding the needs of literacy programs paramount;
- to have the statements approved by the standard membership of the LCA;
- again in cooperation with stakeholders and the ALPS Advisory Committee, to develop a set of standards which all programs should meet and be given the resources to meet;
- to have the standards approved by the standard membership of the LCA.

In the second phase of ALPS:

- in cooperation with stakeholders and the ALPS Advisory Committee, to develop appropriate methods of evaluating community-based volunteer literacy programs based on the good practice statements and standards approved in Phase One:
- to field-test the evaluation tool in various literacy programs;
- to have the evaluation tool ratified by the standard membership of the LCA;
- to use the information gathered through the ALPS Project to recommend criteria for establishing base funding.

Results

In the first phase:

- the *Good Practice Statements for Volunteer Literacy Programs in Alberta* were completed in the spring of 1997;
- in June 1997, the standard membership of the LCA voted 98% in favor of approving the *Good Practice Statements* as guidelines for effective practice in volunteer literacy programs;
- the *Standards for Volunteer Literacy Programs in Alberta* were completed in March 1998;
- in March 1998, the standard membership of the LCA voted 98% in favor of approving the *Standards* as benchmarks for use in evaluating and developing volunteer literacy programs.

In the second phase:

- *Setting the Compass* was completed in May 1999;
- in May 1999, the standard membership of the LCA voted 88% in favor of approving *Setting the Compass* as a tool for program development and evaluation in volunteer literacy programs in Alberta.

For more information

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Appendix E Good Practice Statements and Standards

Standards for Volunteer Literacy Programs in Alberta

prepared by

Sharon Skage and Marnie Schaetti

for the Association of

Literacy Coordinators of Alberta

March 10, 1998

Acknowledgments

The Association of Literacy Coordinators of Alberta (LCA) thanks all of those whose time, energy, and commitment to literacy have contributed to the creation of this document. Foremost among those are the literacy coordinators working in this province. This document is for you. We hope that it will guide you in your efforts to provide quality literacy programming to your communities. Your experience, skill, and professionalism enrich us all.

During the consultation conducted with literacy coordinators, we relied on the Association's Resource People to be our link to coordinators. Our thanks go to Ellen Kildaw, Carol Roberts, Pat Ewert, Kathy Bulger, Meredith Ottoson, Marilyn Hunt, Janice Robertson, Elaine Cairns, and Janice Johnson.

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Introduction

This document contains two of the three components of the Alberta Literacy Program Standards (ALPS) project. The good practice statements -- the first component -- are intended to be used as general guidelines or recommendations for practice in Alberta's volunteer adult literacy programs. The standards -- the second component -- identify the specific details of operation that program administrators can use as benchmarks when assessing the effectiveness of their programs. The third component, which has yet to be developed, will be an evaluation strategy that programs can use to show how they are working towards achieving the standards.

It should be pointed out that the tools in this document are meant to address the common elements of Alberta's literacy programs, namely those related to one-to-one tutoring. The Association of Literacy Coordinators of Alberta (LCA) recognizes that many programs deliver other services to meet their communities' literacy needs, but commissioned this work to develop tools for volunteer adult literacy programs.

The good practice statements and standards are "Alberta-grown"; they are an expression of what literacy coordinators across the province have described as characteristics of a high quality program. They will assist in program development, affirming what we already know about the expertise and successes in our programs, and helping us to identify areas where we can improve our practice. They will also be useful in demonstrating the value of our programs to our participants, communities, and funders.

Statement of beliefs

The following is a summary of what literacy coordinators in Alberta described in 1996 as the beliefs and values that they bring to their work. These beliefs and values are essential to understanding and interpreting the good practice statements and standards.

1. Literacy programs should reflect and meet the needs of the individual in his/her context (home, work, community).
2. Accessible literacy education is a basic right.
3. Literacy skills are empowering, and enhance a person's quality of life.
4. Every individual has worth and ability, and deserves to be respected.
5. Learning happens when a person feels safe, is willing to take risks, and can feel personal success.
6. Learning is lifelong. We are all both teachers and learners.
7. Literacy is a community responsibility.
8. Literacy coordinators are facilitators, helping others so they can help themselves.
9. Honesty, sincerity, and fairness are essential values for a literacy program.

Criteria for developing standards

Part of the process of developing these standards has been to test them for appropriateness. The following criteria were developed for this purpose and applied to each draft standard.

Useful: Standards serve a useful purpose.

Realistic: Standards relate to areas over which the program has control.

Meaningful: Standards are meaningful and significant in each program's particular context.

Mission related: Standards are related to the program missions identified in the ALPS consultations with coordinators in 1996.

Performance related: Standards describe the desired process or outcome against which performance can be measured.

Independent: Standards are independent; that is, one standard does not cover exactly the same component as another.

Manageable: Standards are supported by information that is accessible and easily analyzed.

Constructive: Standards serve the needs of the local program first.

Clearly stated: Any potentially ambiguous terms are clearly defined.

Program missions

In the 1996 ALPS consultations, volunteer literacy program coordinators were asked to describe their programs' missions, or reasons for being. Their responses are summarized as follows.

Volunteer literacy programs exist to:

- support learners in achieving their literacy goals through the use of volunteer tutors;
- provide flexible opportunities to improve reading, writing, math skills, and other areas of learning;
- provide opportunities that support people in making positive changes for themselves, their families, and their communities;
- respond to the literacy needs of both individual and agency members of their communities.

Organization of the document

The good practice statements and standards have been organized into a framework that corresponds to areas of program operation. To help you locate information quickly, the statements and standards are arranged in the following six categories:

1. Community-based Programs

4. Relevant and Applied Philosophy

5. Individualized Programming

6. Quality Tutoring

7. Sound Program Administration

8. Continuous Program Development

In the pages that follow, each category heading is followed by the recommended good practice statements and the standards.

Glossary

For the purpose of this document, the following definitions are being used:

Benchmark: a point of reference in measuring or judging quality.

Category: a general area of program operation used to organize good practice statements and standards.

Community: the geographic area in which a program is located, whether it is as small as a neighborhood or as large as a municipal district, including the general population of that area; or more specific groups of individuals and agencies within the larger population whose interests and activities are related to that of the literacy program.

Evaluation: the process of collecting and analyzing data about a program or any of its components which program participants use to judge the effectiveness of that program relative to its stated goals.

Exit assessment: the means of determining the extent to which a student has achieved his or her goals. (Also called final assessment.)

Good practice: the conditions that must be created and the actions that must take place for the program to operate effectively and deliver high quality service.

Good practice statement: a description of an activity or condition that contributes to an effective, high quality literacy program.

Indicators: key pieces of data used to indicate whether a program is meeting the standards of performance.

Initial assessment: the means of determining an individual student's strengths and levels of competency in reading, writing and/or math, and his or her preferred learning style. Initial assessment information is used to develop an instructional program which meets a student's needs, interests, and goals. (Also called placement assessment.)

Mission statement: a brief statement which describes the purpose of the literacy program.

On-going assessment: the means of determining a student's progress toward his or her goals. (Also called progress assessment.)

Program: an individual volunteer literacy organization. When a standard says that "the program" is responsible for an activity or condition, the focus is on ensuring that the activity or condition takes place. Who actually carries out the task depends on the individual program; it may be the literacy coordinator, another paid staff, the board or advisory council, or a volunteer. The assumption is that this decision will be made at the program level, and documented in job descriptions. In this way, responsibility is not automatically placed on the coordinator if there are other program participants who take part in the program's operation.

Program participants: those individuals directly involved in the program, including students, tutors, paid and volunteer staff and advisory council or board members.

Qualitative data: facts, claims, and assertions in narrative form, and not in numbers.

Quantitative data: facts, claims and assertions presented in numerical forms.

Sources of data: the records, reports, or other materials that provide indicator information.

Staff: includes both paid personnel and the volunteers who support the program in ways other than tutoring.

Standard: a benchmark against which programs can be evaluated.

Values statement: a summary of the ethical principles which underlie program practice.

Vision statement: the picture that program participants develop of their organization in the future, describing the ideal to which their program aspires.

Volunteer literacy programs: the provision of student-centered literacy education services to communities through the use of volunteer tutors. Although services may frequently include broader social and communication skills, the focus is on improving reading, writing and math skills.

Volunteers: those who donate time and energy to help achieve the objectives of the literacy program, including tutors, volunteer staff, and advisory council or board members.

Good practice statements and standards for volunteer literacy programs

PREAMBLE

Each of the following good practice statements and standards is based on the understanding that:

- Students are the first priority in all aspects of literacy programming and operation.
- Volunteer literacy programs respect the diversity of experiences, backgrounds, and goals of participants.
- Programs must receive stable and adequate funding in order to accomplish and/or maintain good practice.

I. COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS

Good practice statement	Standard
a)The literacy program provides services which respond to its own community's literacy needs.	i. The program assesses the literacy needs of its community at least once every three years. ii. Taking into account the program's philosophy, vision, and available resources, the program responds to identified needs with appropriate services.
b)The program has a board, advisory council, or similar committee whose members represent the community. Members have a responsibility to be informed, active, and supportive.	i. The recruitment process for board, council, or committee members is designed to gain representation from a broad range of community groups and program participants. ii. The expectations and responsibilities of the board, council, or committee are clearly documented and communicated to members and prospective members. iii.The board, council, or committee is provided with the Literacy Coordinators of Alberta standards for literacy programs and with the expectations of the funder(s). iv.Working with program staff, the board, council, or committee establishes annual goals and action plans that support the goals of the literacy program. v. The program ensures its board, council, or committee receives the support it needs to accomplish its literacy-related goals. vi. The board, council, or committee meets at least two times per year to focus specifically on matters relating to the literacy program.

Good practice statement	Standard
c)The program develops and maintains partnerships with community groups, agencies, and individuals.	i. The program seeks out partnerships with community organizations and individuals with whom it shares complementary goals. ii. The program acts as a community resource for literacy development. iii.The program reviews its community partnerships annually.
d)The literacy program actively promotes the value of its services and seeks the support of its community. Community support is appropriately recognized.	i. Promotional activities include efforts to reach potential students and tutors and a broad range of community groups. ii. The program recognizes community support, and reviews its methods for recognizing its supporters each year.

2. RELEVANT AND APPLIED PHILOSOPHY

Good practice statement	Standard
a)The literacy program has a clear philosophy and vision that guide program practice.	i. The program ensures that all aspects of program practice are consistent with its philosophy and vision. ii. Philosophy- and vision-related documents are written in plain language. iii.The program's philosophy and vision are communicated to all new staff, students and volunteers in ways that are easy to understand.
b)The philosophy includes relevant mission and values statements.	i. Philosophy-related statements reflect the literacy needs of the community. ii. The program has documented mission and values statements.
c)Program participants develop and periodically update the vision, mission, and values statements.	i. The program offers staff, students, and volunteers the opportunity for input when developing its vision, mission, and values statements. ii. At least every three years, the program offers staff, students and volunteers the opportunity for input when reviewing the vision, mission, and values statements.

3. INDIVIDUALIZED PROGRAMMING

Good practice statement	Standard
a) The program provides the student with an interview and appropriate assessment prior to being matched with a tutor.	i. The program provides each student with a confidential interview as soon as possible after he or she contacts the program. ii. The interview is used primarily to explain the program's services and to discuss any expectations the student may have. iii.The program provides each student with an initial assessment which · is student-centered and participatory; · helps the student to set realistic literacy-related goals; · provides useful information for the student and for initial lesson planning; · establishes a baseline for determining progress.
b)Staff give new students an orientation to the program.	i. A staff member clearly explains the student's basic responsibilities and asks him or her to make a commitment to those responsibilities. ii. A staff member or volunteer introduces the student to the program's facilities and operations.
c) The literacy program assists the student in progressing toward his or her goals. The student, tutor, and coordinator work together to set realistic goals, monitor learning and determine progress.	i. Each student participates in defining and revisiting his or her own goals. ii. The student's goals form the focus of lesson planning and the basis for on-going and exit assessment. iii.The program provides each student with on-going and, if possible, exit assessment which · is student-centered and participatory; · uses appropriate formal and/or informal assessment methods; · is used to record gains in literacy development as well as in related areas such as independence and self-esteem; · provides information that can be used by both tutors and students to review progress and make further lesson plans; · is done in such a way that results can be aggregated across students and used in program evaluation.

Good practice statement	**Standard**
d)The student receives individualized instruction that builds on his or her existing skills. The program provides options for learning that respond to the student's learning styles and emerging needs and interests.	i. The program uses the results of the initial interview and assessment to match the student with a tutor. ii. The tutor and student meet at least once per week. iii.The tutor uses instructional strategies and content that are appropriate for the student's goals, skills, and interests. iv.The tutor uses instructional methods that enable the student to apply the skills being learned. v. A student leaving the program is encouraged to return if or when his or her future goals include further literacy development.
e)Program staff offer regular and timely support and guidance to the student. Programs also provide appropriate referrals for students needing to address issues that may impose barriers to learning.	i. Staff members provide follow-up during the first month of tutoring and continue to be available when the student has questions or concerns. ii. Staff contact each student at least once every three months. iii.The program helps students find needed support services, both within and outside the program. iv.Current information on other education and training programs is available and students are assisted in using it.
f) The literacy program celebrates the student's efforts and achievements.	i. Both staff and tutor give the student frequent praise and positive reinforcement. ii. The program honours each student's efforts and achievements, in an appropriate manner, at least once a year.

4. QUALITY TUTORING

Good practice statement	Standard
a) The program recruits tutors who are willing to help students achieve their literacy-related goals.	i. In recruiting tutors, the program clearly outlines the qualifications required and screens potential tutors to ensure they meet those qualifications. ii. The program has clearly written and realistic job descriptions for its tutors. iii. An interview is used primarily to discuss the tutor's expectations and to explain the program's requirements.
b) The program offers tutors relevant initial and on-going training.	i. The program provides initial tutor training in at least the following areas: · introduction to literacy · learner-centred approaches, methods and strategies in reading, writing, and/or math · available resources and support · tutor roles and responsibilities. ii. The program assesses the on-going training needs of its tutors and provides training to meet those needs. iii. The program assesses the effectiveness of its tutor training.
c) The program supports and guides tutors as they carry out their responsibilities.	i. Staff maintain contact with tutors who are not yet matched with a student. ii. Staff members provide follow-up during the first month of tutoring and continue to be available when the tutor has questions or concerns. iii. Staff contact each tutor at least once every 3 months. iv. Staff help tutors with resource materials as needed. v. Staff help tutors evaluate the effectiveness of their tutoring and support them in improving their techniques as necessary. vi. The program provides opportunities for tutors to network.
d) The program recognizes the contributions of its tutors.	i. Staff informally acknowledge the efforts of tutors on a regular basis by showing them that they are valued and appreciated. ii. At least once a year, the program explicitly recognizes the contributions of its tutors.

5. SOUND PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Good practice statement	Standard
a)Ultimate authority and responsibility for the program are clearly defined.	i. Where a program has a hosting authority, the relationship between it and the literacy program is clearly defined and documented. ii. Lines of authority within the program are clearly defined and documented. iii.Responsibility for all aspects of the program is clearly defined and documented.
b)The literacy program is fully accountable for all the funding it receives.	i. The program follows the funding guidelines provided by its funder(s). ii. The program's fiscal management includes, at minimum, · an annual budget that is approved by the board, advisory council, or appropriate body, · regular reports on the program's financial status to the board or advisory council, and to the coordinator if he/she does not manage the budget, and · an annual review or audit.
c)The program hires staff who have appropriate education, experience, and personal skills to carry out their duties in the context of their community.	i. The broad qualifications looked for in paid staff, depending on the position they are being hired for, include the following: · adult education or training · teaching reading and writing · instructional planning · program planning and administration · volunteer management ii. The program clearly outlines the specific qualifications required by its paid staff. iii.The program uses comprehensive, clearly written, and realistic job descriptions for all paid staff.
d)The program recruits volunteers who will respect its philosophy and who will work to achieve the program's goals.	i. The program's recruitment strategy includes using clearly outlined qualifications and personal interviews to screen potential volunteer staff. ii. The program uses current, clearly written, and realistic job descriptions for volunteer staff positions.

Good practice statement	Standard
e)The program provides the time and fiscal resources necessary for all paid and volunteer staff to receive appropriate training.	i. The program provides all new staff with an orientation to the program's policies, operations, and context. ii. The program identifies the on-going professional development requirements of staff. iii.The program ensures that paid staff have access to relevant initial and on-going training. Depending on their roles in the program, staff training includes the following areas: · teaching reading, writing, and math · volunteer management · assessment techniques and tools · program and office management · building community partnerships · current literacy trends and research iv.The program ensures that volunteer staff have access to initial and on-going training in areas relevant to their duties. v.The program monitors the effectiveness of training for paid and volunteer staff. vi.Through its links with other literacy organizations at regional and provincial levels, the program provides networking opportunities for its paid staff at least twice a year.
f)The program supports and guides volunteers as they carry out their responsibilities.	i. The program's expectations of volunteer staff are clearly defined, documented, and communicated. ii. The program provides volunteer staff with the resources they need to complete their tasks. iii.The program has a means of keeping all volunteers informed.
g)The program has a strict policy of confidentiality regarding students and volunteers.	i. The program has practices in place to protect the confidential nature of participant records. ii. The program clearly communicates to volunteers, students, and paid staff the program's expectations regarding confidentiality for all program participants.
h) An appropriate amount of time and resources are given to each area of program operation.	i. The program's plans for recruiting students and volunteers take into consideration the space and resources available to the program. ii. The coordinator organizes staff time so that both the participants' needs and the program's administrative demands are met within the time available.

Good practice statement	Standard
i) The program recognizes the contributions of staff and volunteers.	i. The program uses a sufficient amount of its funding to ensure fair and equitable staff wages. ii. Staff informally acknowledge the efforts of volunteers on a regular basis by showing them that they are valued and appreciated. iii. At least once a year, the program explicitly recognizes the contributions of its volunteers.
j) The literacy program maintains accurate, up-to-date records and program-related documents.	i. The program has policies and procedures on file that apply to paid staff, volunteers, and students, and reviews them annually. ii. The program keeps up-to-date, relevant participant records. iii. Tutors submit records of the tutor-student pairs' activities as required. iv. Assessment results are recorded in a way that demonstrates the student's progress toward his or her goals and the learning outcomes achieved. v. The program keeps accurate, current financial records on file. vi. Program staff prepare reports as needed for the purposes of being accountable and of informing the community. vii. The program has a comprehensive, annually reviewed records management plan that outlines · which records to keep and for how long, · who has access to which records, and · proper disposal of records.
k) The literacy program has suitable office and tutoring space. Learning resources, office equipment and supplies meet the program's needs.	i. The program provides enough resource materials for every tutor-student pair, and makes the materials available to all participants. ii. Resource materials are relevant to the experience, background, skill levels, and interests of students and tutors. iii. The program reviews its resource materials annually to ensure that they meet the participants' needs. iv. The program has access to facilities that are safe and inviting for all participants, and that are adequate both for administrative tasks and for working with participants. v. The program ensures that staff have access to the office and instructional equipment necessary to carry out their responsibilities.

6. CONTINUOUS PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Good practice statement	**Standard**
a)The literacy program has a regular planning and evaluation cycle.	i. The program has documented plans for the following program areas, and reviews those plans over a three-year cycle: · assessment of community needs · community partnerships · program promotion and public relations · initial, on-going, and exit assessment of students · student goal setting · student support · tutor/volunteer recruitment, training, and support · staff training and support · program evaluation ii. The program develops a long-range plan for future growth and direction and reviews that plan at least every three years. iii.The program is informed of and incorporates relevant developments in literacy practice into its program planning. iv.The program uses the results of program evaluation to set goals for the next year. v. Program evaluation tools are compatible with the program's philosophy, goals, and delivery methods. vi.The program uses as its key indicator of effectiveness the progress that students make toward their goals. vii.The program uses a variety of measures, both quantitative and qualitative, throughout the program cycle, to document its success. viii.Program evaluation includes annual performance reviews and self-evaluation of paid staff.
b)The program gives all participants the opportunity to be involved in planning and evaluation.	i. Program planning includes giving participants the opportunity to take part in setting program goals and objectives. ii.The program's evaluation strategies include giving participants the opportunity to take part in evaluating the program's effectiveness. iii.The program encourages participants to give feedback on the program at any time.

Appendix A Project Background

There were four general factors that led to the Alberta Literacy Program Standards Project and to the development of this document: the growing maturity of literacy programs in this province, the need for a more systematic way to demonstrate the value of our programs, the results of a pilot project in program evaluation, and the need for formal accountability.

Since the early 1980's, literacy programs in Alberta have grown both in number and sophistication. While all coordinators are faced with the day-to-day challenge of recruiting tutors, matching students, and finding support for their programs, many practitioners are looking beyond the immediate activities of their programs to the larger picture of how programs can deliver even better services through professional and organizational development. This desire to move literacy practice in Alberta forward is one aspect of the project background.

ALPS also came about as a result of coordinators wanting to demonstrate in a more systematic way the value that their programs add to their communities. Through the use of program standards, practitioners can demonstrate the value of their programs to participants, to their communities, and to current and potential partners.

An express need for ALPS was made evident as a result of a program evaluation project undertaken by Prospects Literacy Association in Edmonton. In the Pilot Project in Program Evaluation (1994-95), four community literacy programs piloted two evaluation tools to determine their feasibility for use in Alberta. While both tools proved to be useful to some degree, the project results strongly identified a need to develop evaluation tools specific to volunteer literacy programs in this province. In order to develop effective Alberta-specific evaluation tools, the literacy community first had to know what it was that needed to be evaluated. In other words, it needed to develop good practice statements and then standards for programs.

The fourth factor leading to the ALPS Project is the increasing expectations for accountability and evaluation on the part of funders. As part of its planning activities, the Alberta Department of Advanced Education and Career Development (AE&CD) has included assessment and increased accountability as part of its broad goals for adult learning. The

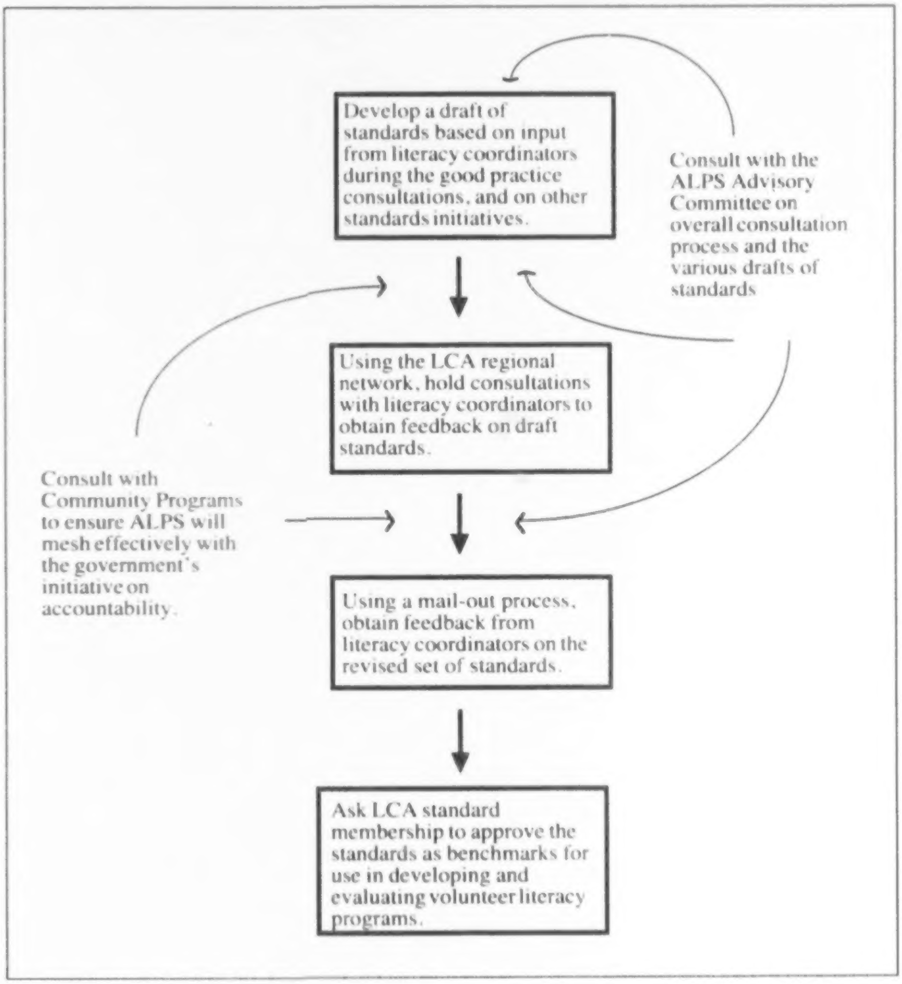
Department will require providers to measure and report on performance through an accountability framework. This will be used to advise Albertans of results achieved in publicly-funded programs, and to ensure that providers have met appropriate standards of quality to protect the learner.

All programs funded through Community Programs of AE&CD, including literacy programs, are also impacted by this focus on accountability and performance measurement. The Department's work in the area includes developing an accountability framework, program performance indicators, and reporting and feedback structures for programs under its mandate. Volunteer literacy programs are in something of a unique position in that the Association of Literacy Coordinators of Alberta has received "external" funding, through the National Literacy Secretariat, to develop its own accountability measures and fit these into the larger framework of the provincial government's initiative on performance measurement and accountability.

As described elsewhere in this document, the primary resources for developing these standards were the literacy coordinators of Alberta. In order to ensure that nothing essential had been missed, other models and initiatives in good practice and standards were reviewed. This included work in literacy, English as a Second Language, workplace literacy, and education, both within Alberta and across Canada and the United States. (See the bibliography in Appendix C for a list of resource materials.)

Appendix B
Consultation Process

ALPS is based on the belief that, in order to be useful and relevant, standards must be developed from the program level up; that is, that they must accurately reflect what literacy coordinators in Alberta see as the essential elements of good practice. The primary source of information for this work, therefore, has been the membership of the Literacy Coordinators of Alberta. ALPS also consulted with its Advisory Committee, which includes literacy coordinators and representatives from related fields who have expertise in evaluation and standards, with representatives of Advanced Education and Career Development, and with other standards initiatives.



Develop a draft of standards based on input from literacy coordinators during the good practice consultations, and on other standards initiatives.

Consult with the ALPS Advisory Committee on overall consultation process and the various drafts of standards

Using the LCA regional network, hold consultations with literacy coordinators to obtain feedback on draft standards.

Consult with Community Programs to ensure ALPS will mesh effectively with the government's initiative on accountability.

Using a mail-out process, obtain feedback from literacy coordinators on the revised set of standards.

Ask LCA standard membership to approve the standards as benchmarks for use in developing and evaluating volunteer literacy programs.

Appendix C
Bibliography

(We have omitted the bibliography for the "Standards for Volunteer Literacy Programs in Alberta" document as all of the items are included in the bibliography of the main document.)

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Notes

Instructions: Use this page to keep track of the evaluation, in terms of what worked well, and what could be changed or improved during the next evaluation.

(Photocopy and save original)